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IS CHRIST INFALLIBLE
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IS CHRIST INFALLIBLE
AND
THE BIBLE TRUE?

BY THE

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REV. HUGH M'INTOSH, M.A.

AUTHOR OF

"THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE GOSPEL" "THE TWO BANNERS"

"THE NEW PROPHETS" ETC.

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PREFACE.

THIS book is the outcome of a deep and growing conviction of the supreme importance and increasing urgency of the great and serious question, or class of questions, indicated by the title, "Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?" It is, indeed, the two sides of the one supreme question in theology and religion, and it is the burning question of the day. It has always held a prominent place, and evoked unique interest in the Christian Church. While other theological questions have been raised and settled,—had their day and ceased to be,—at least as subjects of serious discussion or concern,—this subject is ever with us; and never so much or so seriously as now,—specially in its practical bearings on Christian faith and life. It has now passed beyond the comparatively quiet region of ordinary theological discussion into the wide arena of religious thought and life; and has there caused such controversies and aroused such concern as require every Christian man, especially every minister of the Gospel, to face afresh, and to examine anew, the Bible claim to be the Word of God,—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. For with that claim, the claims of Christ to be the Son of God, or a teacher sent from God, or even a trustworthy or veracious teacher in anything, are radically connected; because He endorsed, sealed, and declared this claim with awful absoluteness. Therefore, with this first and fundamental claim of Scripture, the truth and authority of Christ as a religious teacher stand or fall, as also all objective authority in religion or ethics; for if Christ is not a supreme authority on these, no other can seriously pretend to be. And when many calling themselves Christians, and professedly Christian critics, are now presuming to write and speak

of the "ignorance and errors," "superstitions" and "exegetical mistakes" of Jesus Christ; and when others, occupying prominent positions in Christian Churches, are, while professing to magnify the teaching of Jesus, actually disowning and assailing much of His deepest and most essential teaching, as given in His own very words, in the most decisive and absolute way—it is surely high time to face more seriously than has yet been done, the momentous question, "Is Christ infallible" or authoritative as a teacher, even on the root and basal question in religion and ethics? And if He is not, does He, or can He, possess independent and Divine authority on any religious or ethical question, or can He be Divine? For these are the vital and serious questions about our Lord raised and forced upon us now by much of the teaching and negation of our time;—many who call Him "Lord" daring to question and deny what He says. Many teachers and preachers are now not only denying the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Holy Scripture, but also proclaiming with keenest zest its indefinite and illimitable erroneousness and unreliability,—not merely in small, but in radical and essential things,—yea, in *every kind of thing*,—specially in its moral and religious teaching. Some fear not to condemn the Word of God in its teaching in large parts and essential elements; and throw the whole records of our faith, and the sources of our knowledge of Christ and salvation, into confusion and discredit. And when all this is done with an air of superior wisdom, and a cant of advanced thought, it has plainly become an imperative duty and an urgent necessity to grapple more firmly with these pretentious theories, in their present forms, than has yet been attempted; and to ask with a deeper concern than ever, for the sake of the faith delivered once for all to the saints in the Written Word of God, "Is the Bible true?" And when not a few good and able men in Evangelical Churches, in vain attempt to conciliate scepticism at the cost of truth, make admissions, and adopt principles, and pursue methods, which, if carried out to their legitimate and only logical issues, really subvert the faith, and destroy the very foundations of all our hopes; and when other honoured teachers of our religion, in their desire to magnify Christ, place His teaching in antithesis and antagonism to the teaching of His apostles, with the effect of disparaging and discrediting the inspired writers and writings of the Bible,—which

are the very bases and only sources of our faith or of our knowledge of Christ and His teaching—it has surely become a prime and imperative necessity to deal more thoroughly with these theories and pretensions, and to expose more fully the baselessness and presumption, erroneousness and absurdity of the criticism or philosophy that can lead to such results ;—especially when, if it has any force at all, it is as fatal to the teaching and authority of Christ as to that of His apostles, and is equally destructive of the claims of both the Written and the Incarnate Word of God.

This book was written with that view, with what success the reader must judge. All that I ask is a careful examination of the evidence, and the argument. I would call special attention to the standpoint from which I approach the great subject,—even Christ and His teaching—the Christologic standpoint,—unquestionably the highest and most decisive. This is the great cry and ideal of our day, around which the best recent Biblical study and religious thought centre and crystallise. The teaching of Christ on Holy Scripture in Book I., and the teaching of Christ along with His apostles given in the general and specific proof of the Bible claim, in Book IV., I regard as of prime importance on the whole subject. So far as I am aware it has not been treated largely from the same standpoint, or in the same inductive method, or with like completeness and thoroughness. Nor has the sceptic's apology for scepticism, on the principles, methods, and results of much recent teaching on Scripture and on Christ, been used in like manner, or to the same purpose hitherto—to disprove all rationalistic and errorist theories, by proving that they must abandon their theories or their Christianity.

The doctrinal position on which I take my stand as to Scripture, and for the defence of the Christian faith against both Rationalism and Scepticism, is that the Bible is the Word of God,—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, and the Divine rule of faith and life,—or the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture as originally given, when properly interpreted, in the sense God intended, within the reasonable limits of language and literary usage. It is a middle position between what has been called “absolute inerrancy” (a most objectionable and misleading phrase), on the one hand, and indefinite erroneousness, on the other. Were I to express

it, in contrast with these, in similarly concise form, I might best do so by the "thorough truthfulness" of Holy Scripture; or that the Bible is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority in all its *Teaching*, when truly interpreted, and its real meaning ascertained. I take this position chiefly because, as proved, the Bible makes this claim for itself, and Christ endorses it with His Divine authority. In regard to our Lord Himself, what I hold and maintain here is that Christ is infallible and Divinely authoritative in *all* He taught and uttered; and His own majestic words best express the simple and sublime fact as to every word He ever spoke, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

The critical position held is a *via media* between rationalism on the one hand, and traditionalism on the other—substantially the same in the main positions as that maintained with such transcendent ability by my unique teacher, Dr. William Robertson Smith, the greatest all-round, and specially Old Testament and Semitic scholar of the age. With his view, too, on the supreme question—as to the infallible truth and the Divine authority of the teaching of our Lord, and the danger and untenableness of impugning these—I wholly agree, and firmly hold it to be the only true and safe position. Indeed, the general view as to both Scripture and the teaching of Christ held throughout is well expressed generally in the quotations closing this preface, and more fully later, in the words of this greatest Old Testament scholar, and of the greatest living New Testament scholar—Dr. Westcott, Bishop of Durham.

As to the manner in which the work is written, I have sought to treat the subject with as much thoroughness as possible, with the aid of the ablest works on the various questions,—using, when necessary or helpful in crucial cases, the original languages; but only in such a way as the English reader, of ordinary intelligence, should be able to follow. I have aimed at combining thoroughness with simplicity, and at making it generally intelligible to the humblest disciple of Christ. The frequent divisions made, and the headings used throughout, form a special feature; and will enable the reader the more readily to grasp the leading points, and to follow the order of the thought, as given also in the Contents.

The Introduction is not merely introductory, but also states,

and so far supports, the main position, seizes on the salient points in each book, and gives in condensed form a general outline of the argument.

I have used the same facts and arguments in various places, in different connections, for diverse purposes; not only because I appreciate the force of Thomas Carlyle's principle, and Dr. Thomas Chalmers' practice, that there is no figure of speech worth using except repetition in various forms, but also because they are the chief facts and the decisive considerations which practically settle the main issues; and because the overlooking or insufficiently recognising of them has confused the issues, perpetuated the errors, and continued the many misconceptions and misrepresentations that have had to be exposed and corrected. If, in doing so, it should seem that I have severely handled any writers, it is only those who have roughly handled the Word of God, and wrongly condemned the inspired writers, and have persisted in repeating the oft-exposed misrepresentations; and who denounce every independent man that, after the example and on the authority of Christ and of His inspired apostles, would dare to uphold the Bible claim, or to differ from the false but oracular assertions, or to refuse to accept the infallible *ipse dixit*, of those presumptuous speculators who are vain enough to claim for their own crude, ephemeral productions what they deny to the Oracles of God, and to the very words of even the Son of God!

I have received much aid in various parts from many writers in the vast mass of literature consulted, ancient and modern,—British, Continental, and American,—which is acknowledged so far as seems necessary or was possible, in the references and Appendix. But I have approached the subject from my own standpoint, treated it in my own way, thought the main questions through for myself, and often had to find my way through the most serious issues and crucial parts entirely alone. I owe most to my distinguished professor, Dr. William Robertson Smith, and next to Dr. Westcott, Principal William Cunningham, D.D., and Principal Rainy, D.D. I owe also something to articles and discussions, notes and extracts, letters and reviews, in such papers as *The Critical Review*, *The Expositor*, *The Expository Times*, *The British Weekly*, *The Christian World*—especially for views opposed to my own, every scrap of which I carefully read in order the better to test or tone my own, and to know every-

thing that might be urged for opposing or diverse views. I owe much to the training for several years of some able and distinguished students for the testing examinations of the Presbyterian Church of England in the higher Biblical Instruction of youth.

The work has largely occupied every holiday and every spare moment of many years of a busy ministerial life,—during which two large churches have been built, and two important congregations formed, in Glasgow and London, with other large mission and philanthropic enterprises, involving heavy toil and responsibility. This has given me such opportunities as mere students have not, of observing the evil, unsettling effects of much current teaching tending to discredit the truth and authority of Scripture and of Christ, among the intelligent artisans in that great city whose noble motto is “Let Glasgow flourish by the preaching of the Word,” as also in the hands of smart secularists, and cleverish sceptics, among the religiously indifferent working men of the Metropolis,—just as they have been so sadly illustrated under the blighting influence of rationalism among the manhood of Germany. This has also given me opportunities of following closely the whole course of the discussion, in its ever-increasingly more serious forms and phases. The book has been adapted to the changing aspects of the questions up to the latest and most serious of all, which, in connection with Scripture, asks the solemn question, “Is Christ Infallible?” And as this is by many now answered in the negative, and that, too, on the prime and radical question in religion and morals,—the basis and the postulate of all other doctrines,—many have, in the course of this discussion, in these last times, not only passed from an infallible pope, and discarded an infallible Bible, but have also discredited an infallible Christ,—leaving no authority in religion save an infallible self, with all its absurdity.

I have to own my obligations to many friends for valuable suggestions and the use of much literature in the preparation of this work. And I cannot adequately express my gratitude and indebtedness for great aid in the revisal of the proof, many valuable suggestions, and helpful criticisms, from different viewpoints, from my good and learned friends, the Rev. Dr. Skinner, Professor of Hebrew and Apologetics, Westminster College, Cambridge; Rev. J. Head Thomson, M.A., B.D., of Blackheath, Clerk of the Presbytery of London South; Rev. Hugh M.

Mackenzie, editor of the *Babylonian and Oriental Record*, and the Rev. John Griffin, late minister of the Baptist Church. This does not, of course, mean, or at all imply, that any of them is anyway committed to my positions, or responsible for my statements, or in any measure implicated in what or how I have written; although they have given me valuable help in the revision as friends. I have personally received much benefit from the study, found the careful searching of the Divine Book a perennial fountain of fresh thought and holy inspiration, and realised it to be, what Mr. Gladstone's library was to him, a temple of peace amid the pressure and excitement of other things. This book will have served its end, if it helps others to similar blessings, by leading them to grasp more firmly, and search more deeply, these Sacred Scriptures; in which He tells us we have eternal life,—because they testify of, and bring us near, to Him. And we shall have the true Divine antidote to the errors and evils of our time, amid the aggressive Romanism, on the one hand, and the abounding Rationalism, on the other, if, as we enter the dawn of a new century, we grasp anew, study afresh, and love fervently, the Grand Old Book as “the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever,”—“whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts,”—taking it, amid the encircling gloom, as our guiding star,—sealed as it is by the words of Incarnate God, in the name of Godhead,—and making the watchword of the Reformation ours now, “The Bible is the Word of God, and the Divine rule of faith and life.”

“If I thought that anything in my views impugned the truth or authority of the teaching of our Lord, I should feel myself on dangerous and untenable ground.”—DR. WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH.

“If our Lord's words are accurately recorded, or if even their general tenor is expressed in one of the Gospels, the Bible is indeed the Word of God in the fullest spiritual sense,—for no scheme of accommodation can be accepted when it tends to lead men astray as to the source of Divine help.” “It preserves

absolute truthfulness with perfect humanity. The Letter becomes as perfect as the Spirit."—DR. WESTCOTT.

"People now say that Scripture *contains* God's Word, when they mean that part of the Bible is the Word of God, and another part is the word of man. This is not the doctrine of our Churches, which hold that the substance of *all* Scripture is God's Word. What is not part of the record of God's Word is no part of Scripture."—DR. WILLIAM ROBERTSON SMITH.

"Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."—ST. PETER.

"All Scripture is God-breathed (*θεόπνευστος*). Which things we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."—ST. PAUL.

"Thy Word is truth." "The Scripture cannot be broken."—ST. JOHN.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled."—JESUS CHRIST.

HUGH M'INTOSH.

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IS CHRIST INFALLIBLE ?



INTRODUCTION.

THE TITLE AND STANDPOINT.

I HAVE entitled this book "Is Christ infallible and the Bible true" with some hesitation. I shrank from asking such a serious question in the title of a book, in the face of Christendom, after it has worshipped Him as Divine for nearly two millenniums ; and as He is now generally regarded by most men as at least its supreme teacher in religion and ethics. But after weighing it long, I was constrained to ask it, because it has been often asked of late, and answered, too, in the negative, and that also by many called Christians, in recent discussions about Holy Scripture and the Christian faith. And I have put it into the title as a question, in order, by this serious and arrestive form, the more sharply and solemnly to fix the attention of Christians generally on the grave issues raised about the Son of God, and the sources of our Christian faith, by much modern criticism of the Word of God ;—questions and issues which not only Bible critics and theologians, but also all intelligent Christians, and even the lowliest disciples of Christ, are now being forced to face *volens volens*.

I have also in the title asked, "Is the Bible true?" And this, too, is, in sharp and serious form, the question asked, and answered also in the negative, in many recent theories and discussions about the Bible, which everyone must face who values and means to hold fast "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude ver. 3, R.V.).

But in doing so, I did not mean to indicate or imply that

the two questions were distinct ; for they are inseparable. They are not two questions, but one—really two sides of the one supreme question.

THE PURPORT OF THE BOOK, AND HOW THE SUPREME
QUESTION IS RAISED.

The object and burden of this book is to show that the Bible is, and claims to be, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority ; and that Christ endorses and solemnly seals this claim with His Divine authority, and declares most absolutely the inviolability, solidarity, and organic unity of all Scripture. God, who in times past spake unto the fathers through the prophets and “holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” in the last days of Revelation spoke unto us by His Son, who made this claim of the Divine Book most absolute, and finally put the solemn seal of Godhead to it by the hand and lips of Incarnate Deity. Since Christ thus stands by Scripture, and much recent criticism and teaching have not only been denying the inerrancy, but declaring the indefinite erroneousness and illimitable untrustworthiness of it, immediately the question was necessarily raised, “Is Christ infallible and trustworthy as a Teacher, and is His teaching final and authoritative,—especially on the root and fundamental religious question as to whether the Bible is the Divine source and infallible standard of faith and life?”

Seeing that Christ thus blocked the way to the progress and triumph of their criticism and the acceptance of their “critical results,” many critics answered this serious question in the negative, as they were bound consistently to do ; for no honest interpretation of Christ’s teaching on, His use of, or attitude to Scripture could deny or ignore His endorsement and redeclaration of this Bible claim, or that these precluded their theories of its indefinite erroneousness, or unlimited untrustworthiness,—as many of them to their credit confess ; and, therefore, consistently disown the claim of Scripture, and the authority of Christ as a teacher, on the prime, supreme question in religion and ethics.

Nor could candid, clear-minded, and consistent critics do otherwise. For as far as Scripture is erroneous and untrust-

worthy, so far patently and precisely must also Christ be who endorsed it. Since He signs, seals, and delivers it, His truthfulness and trustworthiness must vary as its does. And as its erroneousness and unreliability are indefinite and illimitable, so must His also be. With it, indeed, He stands or falls.

RECENT CHANGE OF ATTITUDE TO THE CLAIM OF SCRIPTURE AND OF CHRIST.

This was not always so. Even a few years ago it was vastly different. Then it was held to be infallible and inviolable in all its moral and religious teaching, and in everything affecting doctrine and practice—"the only infallible rule of faith and life."¹ It was also received as a thoroughly truthful and trustworthy Book—the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority. Discussions about its truth and authority were usually limited to what Principal Rainy well called "despicable trivialities" about apparent discrepancies, alleged inaccuracies, or paltry errors, which may have crept into the fringe of Scripture. Dr. W. Robertson Smith spoke of them as "grains of sand gathering on the surface of the solid mass of pure gold" forming the Bible.

Controversy was then about such small points and questions as are generally discussed under the heading of "Absolute inerrancy"; and had the questions and discussions been kept within such narrow limits, and about such trivial points, the supreme questions and the serious issues arising from tampering with, or questioning the infallibility and Divine authority of our Lord, seemed far away, and could scarcely be said to be really raised at all.

Many able and sober-minded men who are now deeply concerned would have left such questions severely alone, to exercise the mouse-eyed ingenuity of those half-idle, small-souled critics who have a craze for keen discussions about such trivialities.

But all this has vastly changed of recent years. The questions are no longer restricted within such narrow limits, but

¹ The Westminster Confession of Faith, in its great Article on Holy Scripture, which even Dean Stanley said "was the most nearly perfect Article of Faith ever written." See Dr. Bannerman on Inspiration.

traverse the whole range of Holy Writ, and gravely affect the whole substance of Revelation, reach and shake the very foundations of Divine truth, penetrate if not paralyse the heart of God's Word; directly and seriously raise, unsettle, and missettle the prime questions of the infallibility and Divine authority of our Lord as a teacher, on the supreme question in religion and ethics; and thus imperil Christianity by forging a lever by which the unbelieving foe can move it from its foundations and raze it to the ground.

For the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and independent Divine authority of all Scripture is now questioned, or denied more or less, not merely in trivial things, but in every kind of thing. There is no kind of thing in which these are not doubted or disowned by many professed believers in the Bible Revelation, and even avowed teachers of the Christian faith.

The ethical and religious teaching is now usually first and most strongly urged in proof and illustration of the erroneousness and untrustworthiness of the Bible.

The indefinite erroneousness and unlimited unreliability and illimitable unauthoritativeness of God's Word are freely taught and boldly proclaimed. The whole of it is subjected to the tests of human reason and critical opinion, and every part and element of it is accepted or rejected as it agrees with or differs from their diverse and changing dictates. In terms of unmeasured severity and contempt are those denounced who, with the best Biblical scholarship of the world, and after the example and on the authority of Christ, would dare to maintain the Bible claim, or to question the infallibility of the ever-changing, and often contradictory, "assured results" of modern omniscient criticism! as Dr. Dodds well calls it.

So that the supreme question of the infallibility and Divine authority of Christ is thus directly and inevitably raised in connection with the denial of the basal claim of Scripture, which He endorsed and sealed with His Divine majesty.

Many called Christians, and some sincerely so, explicitly deny His infallibility, finality, and authority as a teacher on many questions affecting the Scriptures He inspired and came to fulfil;—as all should consistently do who disown His endorsement of the fundamental claim, and reject His most solemn declarations of the truth and inviolability of the Word of God.

THE SUPREME QUESTION IS RAISED IN EACH BOOK, AND
THE POSITION TAKEN UP.

In each of the seven books of this volume this supreme question, with its tremendous issues, is raised and reasoned, and is indeed the centre and basis, standpoint and final issue of the whole discussion. It is the subject and burden of this book, especially in its practical bearings on Christian faith and spiritual life. And the position taken up and maintained here on this crucial, supreme question is substantially the position held by my distinguished teacher, Professor W. Robertson Smith, D.D. (whose teaching I had the rare privilege of enjoying for two years), the most unique all round scholar of our age, and the greatest Semitic scholar of this, or perhaps of any time.

That is expressed in reply to charges made against his opinions on O.T. questions, as impugning the infallibility or Divine authority of the teaching of Christ, in these weighty words—

"If I thought that anything in my views, whether in themselves so far true or false, impugned the truth or authority of the teaching of our Lord, I should feel myself on dangerous and untenable ground; but it is only a very strained exegesis that can even appear to make this out."

In saying this I do not, of course, commit myself to all the critical opinions he advanced—though in substantial agreement with many of his main positions, and thinking them with him, not necessarily inconsistent with the Westminster Confession of Faith, or even with the strictest views of plenary inspiration, as he maintained. But in regard to the greater and supreme question as to the infallibility and Divine authority of the teaching of our Lord on everything on which He clearly uttered His mind, and especially on the prime root question of the truthfulness, trustworthiness, Divine origin, authority, and inviolability of all Scripture as originally given, when properly interpreted, I hold firmly that my great teacher took up the only true, safe, and tenable position on which a Christian can take his stand. This position, on the one hand, refuses to accept the authority of mere traditional interpretation, and holds it to be the right and duty of Biblical scholarship to investigate and interpret

freely and fully, if reverently, all questions designed to ascertain truly, and state accurately, the meaning and purport of Holy Scripture; and, on the other hand, it steadfastly rejects and precludes every theory or interpretation that questions or impugns, far more that disowns or denies the infallibility and Divine authority of the teaching of our Lord on anything He ever taught, or any statement He ever made, or any word He ever uttered; for "thus saith the Lord," "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24³⁵).

GENERAL OUTLINE AND SALIENT POINTS.

BOOK I. CHRIST'S PLACE IN THEOLOGY, AND CHRIST AND THE CONTROVERSIES.

Book I. is on "Christ and the Controversies, and Christ's Place in Theology," and gives a brief outline of the teaching of Jesus on leading doctrines of the Christian faith that have been controverted; and shows especially the decisiveness and absoluteness of His teaching on the inviolable truth, thorough trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture. It also treats of Christ's place as a teacher in theology, in relation chiefly to the teaching of the inspired prophets and apostles on which, under the cry of "Back to Christ," much has been written recently prejudicial to the claim of Scripture, and even contrary to the express teaching of Christ, and therefore perilous to the Christian faith;—not only by such writers as Wendt, Harnack, and the Ritschlians and other Germans generally, but also by many British and American writers, such as Dr. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) (whose views are specially dealt with), Dr. Ladd, Dr. Briggs, Dr. Horton, Dr. Farrar, Principal Fairbairn (whose chief work is carefully examined), and many of the Kenotics. It also aims at giving the creed of Christ in His own words, in contrast with other modern so-called ethical creeds. It further lays stress upon the significant fact that it is just on those great truths and facts most assailed, especially in our times, that He speaks with most unquestionable decisiveness and awful emphasis,—such as His own Divinity, sin, free grace, election, redemption, regeneration, justification by faith, resurrection, everlasting punishment, eternal life; and most of all on the

inviolability, truthfulness, and Divine authority of God's Word. As if foreseeing the assaults that would be made on these cardinal verities, He had specially prepared His own words to settle them by the weight of His own Divine authority; and thus shuts men up to the necessity of accepting them or rejecting Him.

BOOK II. IS CHRIST INFALLIBLE AS A TEACHER?

Book II. considers and examines carefully the supreme and momentous question that is directly and necessarily raised by the conclusions of the first book and the discussions of our times, viz., "Is Christ infallible as a teacher?" As the question is a serious one, so is the treatment of it, especially in its momentous, ultimate issues. It makes a full, strong statement on the veritable and unqualified humanity of Christ—too strong and unqualified, I imagine, for many devout souls living on traditional and artificial conceptions of the Person of Christ—which may lay me open to the suspicion of error, if not of heresy, on that profound mystery. But I have made it as the result of many years of earnest, independent study of that special vein of Divine Revelation, induced and illumined by personal experience, under the quickening, if sometimes trying, life-discipline of a gracious Father, which opened up a heart inlet for personal experience of the infinite sympathy of the Divine-human Brother-God—"the man Christ Jesus."

Nor do I think there is anything in what I have said not implied in Scripture, or that is not found unspeakably precious in heart experience.

The realisation of His true human brotherhood, and experience in which "He was made in *all* things like unto His brethren," gives the record of His life unique interest, significance, and preciousness, and makes every item and fragment of the Gospels teem with meaning, throb with sympathy, and breathe with holy inspiration. But while this is eagerly urged, it proves that this affords absolutely no ground for any inference implying error or errancy in what He taught.

It makes a searching examination and a radical exposure of the baselessness of the assumption, and fallaciousness of the reasoning that His real humanity implies erroneousness or

errancy in His teaching. It shows the untenableness of the idea, and the absurdity of the delusion that Christ's confessed non-knowledge as man of the day and hour of one far-off Divine event warranted the inference that He erred in what He professed to know, and which it was His special function and mission to know and to make known, and proves that the only rational inference from this is the very reverse. It shows the falseness and the perilousness of every theory of Kenoticism that would question or impinge upon the infallibility, finality, or Divine authority of our Lord's teaching. It sets forth the sure and solid grounds on which His infallibility and Divine authority as a teacher are based. It exposes the shallowness of the conception that, under the cant of advanced thought, imagines that after the infallibility and authority of Christ have been disowned or challenged any consistent thinker could stop short of scepticism, or refuse rationally to approve and adopt agnosticism as reasonable, requisite, and obligatory. And it also holds up the absurdity of the fond imagination that when Christ's authority is questioned and set aside, there can be any seat of authority in religion at all—that having discarded an infallible Bible and disowned an infallible Christ, any sound mind could rely on a would-be infallible reason, or be vain and absurd enough to place confidence in an infallible self, when disowning an infallible Christ; so that, therefore, the only ultimate issue is absolute scepticism, which is absolute nonsense.

BOOK III. THE *STATUS QUESTIONIS*. CONFUSIONS AND MISCONCEPTIONS, MISREPRESENTATIONS AND EXTREMES. THE SERIOUS ISSUES.

Book III. defines the true state of the question (*status questionis*) in its completeness with precision.

In doing so, whole groups of confusions and misconceptions, misrepresentations and caricatures, which have prejudiced the truth, confused the issues, and prevented thorough discussion of the real question, have been exposed and scorched. Opposite extremes have been avoided and refuted, and the true Bible *via media* has been sought, stated, and supported. The path has thus been cleared for the correct statement and the true settlement of the real issue.

In exposing and refuting the misrepresentations of the real question, many positive proofs and weighty arguments for the Bible claim emerge, and support powerfully the position assailed ; and give striking and impressive illustration of what Dr. Chalmers said of the attacks of infidelity generally upon the Christian faith, that they were not only refuted, but actually utilised to strengthen the defences, by eliciting such replies and revealing such unnoticed points of strength as furnished new positive evidence of the truth of Christianity.

That old, and oft exploded, but recently revived as new, confusion and futility which pretends to distinguish between the human and the Divine in God's Word has been examined and exposed ; and the truth has been unfolded and enforced—that the Bible is *all Divine* and *all human*,—all inspired of God (*θεόπνευστος*), yet all expressed through men, who were all chosen organs of God for that end.

The whole conception, selection, arrangement, and expression were all of God, and yet through and by man. And it is this union and co-operation of the human and the Divine in its production that constitutes the uniqueness and glory of the Bible revelation,—that makes the Written Word the image of the Incarnate Word of God ; and that enables every man through the inspiring Spirit in every part of Holy Writ to hear the voice of God speaking to his soul still as ever,—and thereby shedding into his mind the very light of God, pulsing into his spirit the very life of God, and breathing around his heart the very love of God.

Special, and severe, but richly deserved exposure is made of the persistent misrepresentation that the religious value and practical uses of Scripture are unaffected by the results of recent criticism or theories of inspiration—the English Echo of German unbelief as expressed by Strauss. Full proof is given that the questions raised by prevalent theories of indefinite erroneousness, and rationalistic criticism, are not about small or unimportant matters, but about vital and essential things, which penetrate the substance, cut at the roots, and destroy the bases of the Christian faith. By several outstanding examples is this made patent in such cases as Kuenen and Wellhausen, Dr. Ladd and Dr. Martineau, Dr. Samuel Davidson and Matthew Arnold, Harnack, Wendt, and Dr. Horton. Against the arbitrary and unreasonable way in which the Holy Scriptures are sometimes

used by naturalistic and rationalising critics, protest is made by the distinguished Hebraist Professor A. B. Davidson, Edinburgh, in these significant words, "Was ever a literature so used?"

Finally, the question is stated fully and precisely in substance as follows:—If the Bible claims to be the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority—as it certainly does, if it teaches anything; and if Christ endorses and seals this claim—as He demonstrably does, if language, use, and habitual attitude can prove anything: then, if it is alleged that this claim is untenable and false,—as all theories of indefinite erroneousness do,—and if this allegation is true, it proves that the primary and fundamental claim of Scripture is false. It therefore cannot be the Word of God in any sense—it can only be the false and misleading word of deceived or deceiving men; for the God of truth cannot mislead or lie.

The teaching of Christ on the supreme root question of religion and ethics must also be held to be untrue and misleading, and the claims of both Christ and Christianity are discredited and destroyed. And if in this first and fundamental religious question He has taught error for truth in the name of God and misled men thereby, how can He be the Son of God, or a teacher sent from God, or even a trustworthy man in anything? Is not our religion a delusion, His mission a failure, and our faith vain? These grave questions and tremendous issues the proper statement of the question requires, and the disowners of the claim of Scripture and of Christ must face and answer; and that, too, in full view of the whole massive weight and resistless force of the Christian evidences, by which these claims of the Word of God and of the Son of God are established and demonstrated.

BOOK IV. THE BIBLE CLAIM AND PROOF. THE TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Book IV. gives the proof for the Bible claim. Here the difficulty has not been in finding evidence, but in selecting it from the enormous mass and diversified sources of Biblical and collateral proof, which embarrass arrangement, make amassment difficult, and baffle exhaustive array.

The first impression made upon one in facing the evidence is the *Vast Mass*—immense amount of it, rising up and standing out like great mountain ranges. Indeed it is so great and super-abundant that even classification is a serious problem, full statement an impossibility, and summary outline, with emphasis on chief passages and leading phenomena, all that is practicable.

The *Character* of the evidence, too, is of the highest kind. The quality is as good as the quantity is great. For it is mainly the direct and positive Bible proof of its own root doctrine—of its primary basal claim—which to every believer in Revelation is or should be the chief and decisive evidence—all other being but secondary, and confirmatory at best.

The marvellous Variety and manifold Diversity of it is also very impressive the more it is examined. Every possible line and kind of proof seems to present itself in such embarrassing abundance that its very variety and riches are bewildering. The Bible claim is assumed and asserted, postulated and proclaimed in many great explicit passages, professedly treating of the subject; as well as in minute details and words; in countless indirect but unequivocal and ineluctable statements, references, and quotations; in names, titles, attributes, and characteristics ascribed to it; and in the very words and invariable usage of prophets, apostles, and supremely of our Lord Himself.

Further, *the Persuasiveness* of it strikes you everywhere. In the historical parts and the poetical, the doctrinal and the devotional, the philosophic and the apocalyptic, the practical and the allegorical. A tone of authority, an air of certainty, a breath of eternity, and a voice of God seems ever to pervade the book; and creeps around the reader's spirit like the speaking silence of the lonely mountains; and sinks down into the sympathetic soul as the voice of the Eternal Father—like the deep and solemn tone of the ever sounding sea.

Further still, the *Inevitableness* of this evidence forces itself upon you, especially as the words, usage, and attitude of Christ Himself are faced and pondered. The resources of language and thought seem exhausted to put the Bible claim beyond dispute to all who believe in Revelation; nor does it appear conceivable how even God Himself could more unequivocally or inevitably have expressed its inviolable truth and divine authority than He has done.

The *Unique Completeness* and *Cumulative Force* of the evidence need also to be duly weighed and owned.

For no other truth of Revelation can such an amount and quality, variety and decisiveness of proof be produced ; and it is only when it is all viewed together that its full weight, cumulative force, and unique decisiveness are adequately realised. So that it is vain to inquire what other truths the Bible teaches, if its teaching on this—its first and fundamental doctrine—is not received. It teaches this if it teaches anything. Therefore, all who profess to accept its teaching must accept its teaching on this, or abandon their own avowed position.

The *Unique Relation*, too, of its claim and teaching on its own truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority, to all its other truths and claims, must be faced and recognised. It makes this the basis of all its other truths, and the ground of its every claim on the faith and obedience of men. So that if we accept its teaching on this, its prime and fundamental claim and truth, we ought to receive its teaching on all other things. And if we reject its teaching on this, we should deny its independent, or divine authority on anything.

For if the Bible in the name of God teaches error for truth, and makes a claim that is false the basis of all its other claims and teaching, then, patently not only its truthfulness, but its veracity is destroyed, and should be denied, and itself declared to be, not the Word of God at all, but the false and misleading word of deceiving or deceived men,—a patent *reductio ad absurdum*,—which, however, cannot be evaded except by proving that the Bible makes no such claim, and then overthrowing all the evidence by which it is demonstrated.

Finally and supremely, the evidence has a *Divine Decisiveness* and *Finality*; for it centres, culminates, and is crowned in Christ.

It is the Lord Himself, and none less than He, who, by His own unique words, manner of using, and habitual attitude to Scripture, teaches the truthfulness and trustworthiness of all Scripture with the most ineluctable decisiveness, declares its inviolability and Divine authority with the most awful absolute-ness, and endorses and seals with His own Divine authority its first and basal claim, in His own most solemn and majestic way.

With these Scriptures in His hands, and sealed by His

Divine authority, He stands forth before the world through all the ages as their author, burden, and fulfiller, and declares them to be the Word of God that cannot lie or err, or fail or pass away, though heaven and earth may pass away, till all be fulfilled.

In His final message to mankind at Revelation's close, He warns every man of the peril of impinging on the integrity or impugning the authority of His Divine Book, in words which may well make all men stand in awe.

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22^{18, 19}).

Here again we see as always He stands by Scripture. On its truth and authority He stakes His own. With it, therefore, His religion stands or falls. And on His infallible truth and Divine authority we, with unlimited confidence, take our stand, and calmly smile at all the assailants of it;—feeling assured that no weapon that is formed against it shall prosper; but be, as ever before, broken to pieces, for "the Word of the Lord endureth forever."

This evidence settles—

First. That the claim of Scripture to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, is *not an à priori theory* or a preconceived opinion of inspiration, as has so persistently been misstated. But it is a palpable revelation of God in Scripture—simply the expression or embodiment of the foundation truth and first claim of God's Word taught throughout the Bible, underlying and giving value to all its teaching. It is gathered from the widest and most careful induction of all Scripture. It is a striking contrast to the vague, fragmentary, one-sided caricature so pretentiously palmed off as a scientific induction by the reckless advocates of indefinite erroneousness.

Second. *The evidence requires* the opponents of the Bible claim to face, *answer*, and refute it—to show that it is not proof or even probability, if they own the authority of Scripture or of Christ at all. Yet this is what the errorists never do, or attempt

to do, or can be provoked to do, though asked, challenged, and bound to do, as they are again by this restatement. This they carefully, scrupulously, and prudently evade doing, because they have a shrewd suspicion that they cannot do it. Therefore they betake themselves to the old, and easy, but invalid resort of making objections to the Bible claim, and building their theory of indefinite erroneousness out of the difficulties of the opposite view,—as if difficulties were valid objections to any truth established by proper positive evidence, or as if objections to the true view formed a sufficient or valid basis for the opposite theory!

Third. The evidences preclude all theories of indefinite erroneousness. Many of the best scholars and ablest theologians in all ages have held that the Bible claims for itself, as originally given, when truly interpreted, entire freedom from error of any kind, “absolute inerrancy” as some unwisely call it, or allow it to be called.

And it must be owned that some of the evidence seems really to favour that view, especially the words of our Lord; while the whole of it supports, requires, and demonstrates at least the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture, which is what we take our stand upon.

But we distinctly decline to commit ourselves to the extreme position, and strongly disapprove of the title “absolute inerrancy,” which is a recent acute invention of the advocates of “indefinite erroneousness,” the opposite extreme; and by which they have, through a misleading and inaccurate phrase, prejudiced the true and demonstrable claim of the thorough truthfulness and Divine authority of all Scripture, which is the strongest and surest middle position.

And while we do not take up the inerrantist's position, but own and show that much can be said for it from certain stand-points, and assail throughout the errorist's opposite position, and prove its utter untenableness and disastrous weakness in facing scepticism; yet we show and urge the unwisdom and the peril of fighting the battle for the Christian faith against either scepticism or rationalism on the narrow, negative, and at least questionable ground of absolute inerrancy.

A signal tactical mistake is surely made when the truth of Christianity is, as by some, staked on such a question, and our

religion is made to pay with its life if a single proved or probable error or discrepancy, however paltry or despicable, seems to be found in Scripture.

The weakness and folly of staking such a momentous issue upon such a narrow point are shown all the more from—*1st*. The fact that it is quite needless now, since the battle between faith and unbelief is not about trivial, but radical and essential things. *2nd*. That all errorists now not only deny the absolute inerrancy, but declare the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, and therefore of Christ on every kind of thing, and on the first and fundamental thing in religion and ethics. *3rd*. Because the evidence does not so unquestionably prove absolute inerrancy as the thorough truthfulness and Divine authority of all Scripture. But whatever else the evidence may do or not do, it at least demonstrates, as is manifest on inspection, that the Bible claim and teaching preclude every theory of indefinite erroneousness, especially such erroneousness and untrustworthiness as it is now so freely charged with.

BOOK V. THE OPPOSING VIEWS STATED AND CONTRASTED APOLOGETICALLY. THE APOLOGETIC POSITION. THE SCEPTIC'S APOLOGY, AND THE REPLY.

Book V. gives the apologetic position, and the sceptic's apology, in which the opposing views are stated and contrasted apologetically.

It is in many ways the chief and crucial, as it is the largest, book of all. In it the whole argument reaches its climax and consummation; and the whole elements of the controversy are massed, and marshalled, and put into contrast for the final struggle and the ultimate issue.

Inerrantist and errorist, sceptic and rationalist, Bible Christian and modern critic, prophet and apostle, and Jesus Christ Himself, all appear upon the field, and enter into the conflict to decide the momentous issues connected with the Bible on which the hopes of mankind hang; till at length the great Lord Himself stands out peerlessly alone with the Divine Book in His hand, declared and sealed, in the name of Godhead, to be the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever.

In the previous books it has been proved that the Bible

claims to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority ; and that Christ endorses this claim, and seals it with His own inviolable truth and Divine authority ; and that, therefore, this claim has to be accepted by everyone who owns the teaching of Scripture or the authority of Christ, on the primary and fundamental question of religion and ethics,—the question that underlies and largely settles all other truths and questions. So soon, however, as this is said and proved, the errorists raise a loud and passionate cry that this position is untenable apologetically, that it foolishly imperils Christianity by exposing it to the easy and fatal assault of unbelief, and that this claim, and especially absolute inerrancy, is mainly and culpably responsible for making many sceptics.

A sufficient general reply to this is found in the fact that—
1st. The attack of modern scepticism is not based upon the difference between professed Christians, or upon absolute inerrancy, but upon the radical and essential verities of the Christian faith, and the denial of the supernatural. *2nd.* That many sceptics are notoriously made by their persistent proclamation of the erroneousness and untrustworthiness of the Bible. But this only paves the way for the comparison of the respective views apologetically.

I. INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE INERRANCY.

First, the extreme opposites of absolute inerrancy and indefinite erroneousness are compared apologetically—the inerrantists' and the errorists' views, as for conciseness we call them.

As already stated, we do not adopt or in any way commit ourselves to absolute inerrancy ; and although we do not attack it in itself, yet we have emphatically pointed out the weakness and un wisdom of fighting the battle for the Christian faith against the sceptic on that narrow, negative, and at best disputable ground. This unnecessarily exposes the whole line to attack at countless points, and enables the sceptic with less difficulty to make out a plausible case, or a doubtful issue against Christianity than against our stronger and more guarded position of the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture. Such a plausible case at least as may excuse or warrant, if it does not justify or require agnosticism and unbelief.

Nevertheless, we hold it only just and right to state what can be urged for it, when compared with the errorists' view ; especially as this is also useful as an outwork, and is, indeed, our first line in defence of the less exposed and more guarded position in which we take our stand for the defence of Christianity against sceptic, rationalist, and errorist of every kind. The inerrantists' position is first defined, and what it is they have to defend is precisely stated, by clearing away many misrepresentations and confusions which have prejudiced the truth, obscured the true position, and confused the real issue. Then it is carefully compared and contrasted apologetically with the errorists' position.

THE INTRINSIC WEAKNESS OF THE ERRORISTS' POSITION IN FACING THE SCEPTIC.

The weakness and utter indefensibleness of the errorists' position is proved at length by many fatal facts and cogent arguments. Here the sceptic comes in and does signal, if cavalier, service in exposing the fatality to the Christian faith of the theory of the erroneousness of Scripture. With the remorseless logic of unbelief he shuts the errorists up to the necessity of abandoning their theory or disowning their Christianity. At four different stages, and in four different forms, the sceptic, seizing on the assertions, applying the alleged results, and reasoning on the principles of the errorists, so presses his apology for his scepticism, and so urges his argument against Christianity, that it is left defenceless and demolished ; and agnosticism proved to be right and reasonable, and the only wise or possible position for any clear and honest mind. In fact, on the prevalent theories of the erroneousness and untrustworthiness of Scripture, and on the common principle of its advocates, he without difficulty demonstrates that there is no valid defence possible for the Christian faith, and nothing Christian,—nothing certainly distinctive of Christianity, to defend. For it is plainly impossible out of a Bible so erroneous and untrustworthy as it is now so often proclaimed to be, to make a certain and trustworthy Christianity, or a practical and authoritative morality.

Besides, it would be not only impossible but wrong to make a rule of faith and life binding on men's consciences from a book which, on the errorists' and rationalistic principles, has no

independent or Divine authority ; but only such authority as each oft varying mind may choose to give it. Among many others, two things in particular powerfully support the sceptic in his drastic and disastrous, if legitimate conclusion—

First. The massive array of evidence that proves the Bible claim, in some parts of it does seem to support inerrancy. The whole of it proves beyond dispute that Scripture claims and teaches its own thorough truthfulness and Divine authority. And all of it inevitably precludes indefinite erroneousness or untrustworthiness. This the sceptic sees, seizes, and sets in full and direct opposition to the errorists' theory, and patently makes out a direct and complete contradiction of the Bible's first and fundamental claim and doctrine—the basis of all its other claims and doctrines ; and then, accepting the errorists' theory, he directly shows that, on their principles, the root doctrine and base claim of the Bible is false and misleading ; and thus, at one fell stroke, he easily destroys the credibility of Scripture, of Christianity, and of Christ.

Second. So long as one item of the evidence for what seems the Bible claim remains unanswered, or even probable, so far, on the theory of its erroneousness, the truth of the Bible and its religion appears disproved or improbable,—which for practical life is equivalent. The errorists are more bound to answer every item of the evidence for the Bible claim than the inerrantists, as alleged, are bound to answer their supposed evidence of a single error or discrepancy ; because the one is direct and positive proof, the other is only indirect, negative, and at most not proper evidence at all. One item of direct evidence is of more weight than many apparent errors or discrepancies. Therefore, their assertion of real error in the Bible, while even one item of positive evidence for inerrancy, truthfulness, or trustworthiness remains, more imperils Christianity than the inerrantists' view. And one such item is much more valid against their view than countless discrepancies, or apparent errors against the true Bible claim. How much more when, as now, the errors alleged are innumerable and the erroneousness indefinite and undefinable, and the untrustworthiness unlimited and illimitable ? Thus the tables are completely turned in what was the stock argument against, and supposed to be the most decisive objection to, inerrancy ; and it is proved to hold with immeasurably greater weight and

force against the errorist's own theory. Why, here is a marvellous thing that just precisely at that very point where the inerrancy view was thought to be weakest and adherence to it most fatal to Christianity, there, precisely there, the theory of Bible erroneousness is itself immeasurably weaker, and its own inherent perilousness more palpably fatal still. How much more when contrasted, not with inerrancy, but with our carefully guarded, thoroughly proved, and eternally defensible position of simple truthfulness, trustworthiness, and divine authority? The force of this crucial point is shown fully below.

THE ERRORISTS' THEORY IN FACE OF CHRIST'S TEACHING.

The untenableness and seriousness of the errorists' position apologetically appears most sharply and solemnly in face of our Lord's most explicit and emphatic teaching on this specific question. Some of them, to save themselves from the legitimate consequences of their theories, fall back from the teaching of Scripture in general to the teaching of Christ. But it is a vain resort—a futile appeal. For—apart from the fact which they all ignore (though it is fatal to much they advance), that we know nothing of Christ and His teaching except through Scripture—so that so far as Scripture is erroneous and untrustworthy (which on this theory is indefinitely and illimitably), so far is our knowledge of Him and of His teaching, as also of His religion—His very words, backed by His practice and attitude, are the most explicit and decisive in Holy Writ against this theory; and they are the most absolute and ineluctable in declaring the inviolable truth and Divine authority of all Scripture. Therefore the sceptic has only to seize and wield the weapons thus foolishly forged by the professedly Christian teachers of Bible erroneousness, and by placing this theory in opposition to the prime, basal claim of Scripture, so expressly taught and so solemnly sealed by Christ, to demolish the bulwarks and explode the foundations of the Christian faith, to falsify the claims of both Scripture and Christ, and to destroy by one fatal blow the source, centre, and substance of God's revelation.

Thus the vaunted apologetic strength of the errorists' position is found to be a delusion, is shown to be not only untenable but self-destructive, and is proved to be without

anything definite and Christian to defend, or any possible means of defence. There may be weakness and unwisdom apologetically in facing scepticism in the position of absolute inerrancy, but the position of indefinite erroneousness is demonstrated weakness and manifest folly; and were there no more valid defence for the Christian faith than this theory affords, it would be wise for Christian apology to own defeat, and frankly to confess that Christianity is indefensible and false; and should now, like all other pretended revelations, take its place among the exploded and expiring superstitions that have been palmed off upon a credulous humanity in the name of God for the purposes of priestly aggrandisement, as leading rationalistic and religious evolutionists maintain.¹

THE DEFENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH AVAILABLE EVEN
FROM THE INERRANTISTS' POSITION.

But though the teachers of the erroneousness of Scripture offer no valid defence of Christianity from their position, it is shown that Christianity is by no means without a defence against either Rationalism or scepticism. From the true Bible position, not only a valid, but an invulnerable defence is supplied, fully, finally, and for ever. And even the extremest position of absolute

¹ See Wellhausen's *History of Israel*, Kuenen's, and others of that rationalistic school. Dr. W. Robertson Smith, a higher authority and a greater scholar, specially in Semitic literature, than any of them, repudiates this idea in these significant words: "There can be no question that if the book [Deuteronomy] is a fraud designed to deceive the reader, it cannot be a part of inspired Scripture. The theory assumes that priests and prophets were in the trick, which imposed on the whole piety of the nation, including its inspired leaders. Such a theory is utterly incredible to anyone who believes in the reality of God's supernatural dealings with His people in the old dispensation, and I entirely repudiate all sympathy with it, not only because it involves a rationalistic view of the O.T. history, and because it is impossible that a book of the profound spirituality of Deuteronomy could have originated in a fraud, but because I believe that there are, apart from theological considerations, conclusive historical reasons for assuming that the Deuteronomic code was in existence at least a generation earlier, and had actually been lost in the days of Manasseh." "Apart from the psychological violence of the hypothesis that the author of a book like Deuteronomy would be a party to a vulgar fraud, it appears to me that this view stands condemned on the critical evidence itself, as I hope to show at length on a suitable occasion."

inerrancy is not destitute of an apology, and may offer a valid and apparently irrefutable defence, as is fully shown. Indeed, like Wellington at Torres Vedras, they can present a threefold line of defence, each stronger than the former.

First Line of Defence.

First. They can maintain what even Dr. Farrar, a keen opponent of their views, declares, that all the malignant ingenuity of scepticism has been baffled to make out one demonstrable error. What he says specially of the N.T., Dr. A. B. Davidson says of the O.T. Similarly, Bishop Westcott, Bishop Ellicott, Bishop Ryle, Principal David Brown, Principal Patrick Fairbairn, and Principal Rainy (while not committing himself to inerrancy, and objecting to its being made an article of faith) do not admit that inerrancy has been disproved, and still hold that were all known, it would probably be found that all the difficulties would vanish, as so many have done, in the progress of Biblical study and archæological research. Besides, many of the ablest inerrantists, like the late Principal William Cunningham, D.D., New College, Edinburgh, and Principal Paton, D.D., of Princeton, distinctly deny, and show that it is not the true state of the question to aver that the inerrantist's view makes Christianity pay with its life for a single error; but is only a difficulty to it;—and no one was ever such a master of the *status questionis* as William Cunningham. Even in this first line, then, the inerrantists can hold their own as they have done so tenaciously for nineteen centuries; and it will take more learning and better logic than their opponents have yet shown to dislodge them from their first position, and to prove it untenable.

Second Line of Defence.

Their second line is that it is only of the Scriptures as originally given, and when properly interpreted, that they predicate inerrancy; and since the originals are not now extant, it is impossible to *prove* that the alleged discrepancies or errors were in them; and, therefore, it is manifestly impossible to *disprove* inerrancy. Nor is this a mere logical device to baffle disproof, or an argument from ignorance or mere possibility; for there seems positive teaching and evidence for inerrancy, while there is none for the theory of erroneousness; and further, and this

specially, the alleged errors and discrepancies have notoriously largely vanished, and have mostly been proved to have been errors made by those who charged the Bible with their own mistakes. Nay, more, the countless cases in which alleged errors have been disproved not only show that in these cases the errors existed only in the erroneous imaginations of those who alleged them, but they also *establish the principle of a vanishing quantity* for the supposed errors or discrepancies that may remain unsolved; and they, further, positively prove the possibility and the probability that, with fuller knowledge and greater research, they would all vanish, or become so “despicable” as to be beneath the notice of reasonable men. And here as elsewhere probability must be the guide of life. Besides, all this is greatly strengthened by the immense mass of simply marvellous confirmations, by hard, unquestionable facts, not only of the truthfulness and trustworthiness, but of the minute and even literal accuracy of Scripture which historical, archæological, as well as Biblical research have recently discovered and produced with a singular opportuneness. These every day increase, to the explosion of many fine-spun but baseless theories, and to the confusion of much recent criticism. In this second line, therefore, the inerrantist’s position seems not only strong, but apparently irrefutable; and it at least seems impossible to demonstrate its untenableness, or to drive him from it, or to disprove his main contention, or to deny that the probabilities are strongly on his side.

The Third Line of Defence.

The *third* line of defence is that there are difficulties connected with all our knowledge and experience and action in this life—difficulties arising from the limitations of human knowledge, and the greatness or the infinitude of the objects of human thought. No region of knowledge, or sphere of action, or experience of life, is entirely free of difficulties. Almost every fact in nature, every event in providence, every act of life, every truth of science, philosophy, and Revelation, is more or less connected with difficulty, or open to objection; some of the best established facts of science, such as the law of universal gravitation, having never been entirely freed of difficulties. If, therefore, the doctrine or apologetic position of inerrancy

has difficulties or is open to objection, it is only what from analogy should be expected ; and, as Butler has incontrovertibly reasoned, so far from these constituting a valid ground for disbelief or rejection of what is supported by proper positive evidence, they, on the contrary, confirm its truth or probability. In fact, the absence of such would form a real difficulty, as being out of harmony with what is met in all other spheres of knowledge and experience in God's vast kingdom. Men of science, philosophy, and common sense accept and act on facts and truths established on their own proper evidence, notwithstanding any difficulties or objections that may be connected with them. They leave these to be solved in the progress of discovery or research, or to remain unsolved, if need be. But they have rightly and firmly refused to allow these to hinder their belief of, or action on, what they have adequate positive evidence for, and have thus led on to all the progress of the ages. Therefore, should the inerrantist wish or deem it wise to take his final stand in this third line of defence, he would only be doing what every defender of truth, in every sphere of knowledge, action, and investigation does, and is by sound reason fully justified in doing, to baffle unreasonable Rationalism, and to defy prejudiced unbelief ; and there he may defend himself, his doctrine, and his Christianity against all assailants effectively for ever. In the first line his position is tenable, in the second irrefutable, and in the third impregnable.

ADDITIONAL EXPLANATIONS OF APPARENT DISCREPANCIES.

And were anything further to be desired in explanation of these discrepancies and difficulties, it is superabundantly supplied by the special and unique reasons to account for them in Scripture, as fully shown. The *Scriptures* are all *Very Ancient*, the earliest over three thousand years at least—utilising others older still, among the earliest literature of the world—and the latest nearly two thousand years. All scholars know how easily and inevitably discrepancies creep into such writings in the vicissitudes of ages and the methods of transmission, creating in secular writings a science of emendations. And though “by a singular care and providence” the Scriptures were preserved beyond other ancient writings, yet through transcription, translation,

transposition, interpolation, corruption, manner of using, marginal notes, and cognate processes, discrepancies would necessarily find their way into them.

Besides, the Scriptures are at best but *Fragmentary*—fragmentary as a history, though complete as a Revelation. This, as Bishop Westcott has shown,¹ goes far to account for many seeming errors and discrepancies. Just as the having of four Gospels instead of one—John's Gospel as well as the Synoptics, and the Acts of the Apostles along with the Epistles of Paul—explains much that would be otherwise perplexing and apparently discrepant; so the fragmentariness of the Scriptures as a whole, which John emphasises as to the life of Christ (John 21²⁰), accounts for much of this that still remains. This, on a principle illustrated in Scripture, and familiar in human life, gives a good and solid reason for believing that if we had fuller information, specially if we knew all, what now remains would in all probability also be removed.

Further, the *Bible* was given *chiefly* as a *Revelation for faith and conduct*; and everything in it is subordinated to the dominant idea, which explains much that might otherwise be perplexing. This is well illustrated in the Book of Judges, where the literary and historical aspects are made subservient to the religious and moral ends. This incurs the displeasure and disparaging criticism of certain critics who regard it only or chiefly from literary and historical standpoints, but disregard its main design, and lose sight of the chief end of both Scripture and Revelation; and thus greatly “err, not knowing the Scriptures,” nor the purposes of God therein.

Further still, the Bible is an *Oriental religious book*, with so vastly different ideas, characteristics, and literary methods and usages from ours. There could not be a greater mistake or injustice than to test and interpret the Bible by our Western and modern conceptions and literary methods; and it is because this has been so largely done that many seeming errors and faults have been supposed to be in Scripture, which existed only in the minds and by the mistakes of those who allege them. Here not only the Rationalists, but the traditionalists, have greatly erred; and have, by overlooking this distinction, identified their own

¹ *The Introduction to the Gospels, The Gospel of the Resurrection, The Revelation of the Risen Lord.*

mistaken interpretations with the truth, and have thereby injured the Word of God by their traditions, and made errors appear to be in the Bible that were not really there. They have failed to avail themselves of the powerful aid of believing criticism, which, by grasping and applying this fact, has freed the Bible of many difficulties and apparent errors, as is well shown, among others, in Dr. Robertson Smith's *O.T. in the Jewish Church*.

Similarly and finally, many of the discrepancies and other seeming, and in some cases apparently serious, errors are satisfactorily accounted for and removed by apprehending the *true Origin and Method of Composition* of large and important parts of Scripture. This is well illustrated in the O.T. in the Mosaic books—the Hexateuch; and especially in recent discussions about Deuteronomy, in which Dr. Robertson Smith, with his unique scholarship and ability, played such a large part. He has shown with remarkable lucidity and force that by availing ourselves of some important findings of believing Higher Criticism,—such as the composite character of some of the books, and the development and adaptation of Mosaic principles to the needs of subsequent ages, and the editing and re-editing by later authorised prophet or chronicler, and later additions and redactions of the earlier writings or substance, and cognate means,—many staggering statements and conflicting accounts in these early Bible books are explained and reconciled by certain leading facts and findings of true and reverent Biblical scholarship which otherwise appeared insoluble, and were seemingly contradictory; and that not merely in details and trivial things, but in large and substantial matters, and in important statements and representations.¹ Here again the excessive and unreasonable prejudice against Criticism, specially Higher Criticism, of many advocates of inerrancy, and of able defenders of the truth and Divine authority of Scripture, has prevented them accepting, even considering, and utilising some of the true and valuable results of it for the removal of somewhat serious discrepancies and difficulties that force themselves on many earnest and believing students of the O.T. All this would come under the proper interpretation of Scripture.

In the N.T. this is exemplified aptly in the Gospels and discussions thereon. The origin, sources, and method of com-

¹ See Dr. W. Robertson Smith's *The O.T. in the Jewish Church*.

position, as well as the fragmentary character of the Gospels, afford vast and valuable means of accounting for the seeming errors and discrepancies, though they were largely increased. The theories of many of the Rationalists of the origin and composition of the Gospels, make them not only not the original Gospels, nor even copies of them, but second or third hand compilations from a book of discourses (λόγια) like Matthew's, and a book of narratives like Mark's, and now, according to Wendt, a third book of discourses (λόγια) like John's, together with the writer's own conceptions, mingled with current opinions of their times. The upholders of inerrancy, or of the truthfulness of Scripture, need not, as they do not, adopt any or all of these uncertain and ever changing theories. But they can argue resistlessly, that if there is any truth in these theories, it is surely more than sufficient to account for all the alleged errors and difficulties in the Gospels as we have them, though they were multiplied a thousandfold; and it renders any other explanation of them superfluous. The amazing thing is that those holding any such theories of the origin and composition of the Gospels, or any who regard them as in measure true, should imagine that there were any errors in the original Scriptures, when this alone would so superabundantly account for them. Certainly to all sensible men it is evident that they must abandon either their theory of the erroneousness of Scripture, or their theories of the origin and composition of the Gospels. In these and other ways the inerrantist may surely far more than account for all the alleged errors and difficulties of Scripture.

ERRORISTS' AND INERRANTISTS' APOLOGETIC POSITIONS COMPARED.

In view of all this it appears that the extremest position of absolute inerrancy is a tenable, defensible, and ultimately an immovable position apologetically; and when compared with the position of indefinite erroneousness, it is strength itself as against demonstrated weakness and utter indefensibility. The one has proved a tenable and irrefutable position against all assailants for nearly two millenniums, and what has been held so long may well seem to be tenable for ever.

The other, by its own very principles and practices, renders a valid defence impossible against scepticism; and is ultimately

subversive of the Christian faith, and destructive of all authority or finality in religion or ethics.

II. THE POSITION OF INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS COMPARED APOLOGETICALLY WITH OUR POSITION OF THE TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

When compared with the second, and more guarded, and less exposed position on which we take our stand, viz. the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture, the position of indefinite erroneousness is then, of course, simply nowhere.

ALL FOR THE FIRST POSITION HOLDS *À FORTIORI* FOR THIS.

For besides its own inherent strength, and all the great elements of strength peculiar to itself, partly set forth in our outline of the Christian evidences, all that has been said in defence of the most extreme position of absolute inerrancy holds, *à fortiori*, with immensely increased force and unquestionable cogency of this second, stronger, and less assailable position. Like Wellington, while he "maintained the position" at Quatre Bras, and there "completely defeated all the enemy's attempts,"¹ yet he retired, and took his final stand for the peace and liberty of Europe at the stronger and pre-chosen position of Waterloo. So while the Christian faith might be defended from the position of inerrancy, yet we decline, and deem it unwise, to take our stand for the defence of it there, but have deliberately taken it at the stronger and less assailable second position.

Nevertheless, all that has been or can be adduced for the first position holds much more forcefully and less questionably for the second.

PECULIAR ADVANTAGES OF THIS POSITION.

It deprives the opponents of many of the advantages they have against inerrancy, such as the power to seize on small points to discredit the whole, and then ride roughshod through all. It evades many side issues and doubtful disputations. It

¹ Wellington's Despatches.

avoids perplexing definitions and confusion of terms. It prevents having to fight the great battle of the faith on a narrow point, and to appear to have to prove a negative. It takes advantage of the full weight of the argument from the claim of Scripture. For the evidence does not so demonstrably prove inerrancy as truthfulness, the great mass and weight of the evidence is directly and fully valid only for the latter. It frees the defence of many of the most plausible objections, which consist of despicable trivialities ; and, therefore, have no validity or relevancy here. It presents a much less exposed line, and incomparably fewer points of attack. It inevitably lays on the sceptic the burden of disproving the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture, which he can never make even plausible in the face of the proof and the facts. It prevents rationalising but professedly Christian critics from using any argument against our position that impugns the veracity or Divine origin and character of Scripture ; because they equally with us are bound to maintain these. It brings sceptics and Rationalists directly into conflict with the decisive words and Divine authority of Christ, backed by the whole evidence establishing Christianity. It nullifies the stock and plausible, but not solid or conclusive, argument as to the supposed fatality of a single seeming error in Scripture ; for it has simply no validity here, and is totally irrelevant. It rests and bases the defence on the embodied substance of Scripture—not on the grains of sand that may have become attached to the solid mass, but upon “the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture.”¹ It meets fairly and squarely the prevalent attacks on Scripture, which are directed now chiefly, not against the small, but the substantial things—not against the trifles, but the essentials of the Christian faith. And it brings the whole force of the argument, and the full weight of the evidence for the truth and Divine origin of the Christian faith, undiverted by side issues and undiminished by doubtful disputations about minor questions, to support and establish the substance of the Written Word, endorsed and sealed by the Incarnate Word of God, to confront in all its massive strength, scepticism and Rationalism and every form of errorism, with calm confidence, fearless fortitude, and Divine assurance ; “for the Lord Most High Himself shall establish it.”

¹ Gladstone's *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*.

THE THREE POSITIONS COMPARED APOLOGETICALLY, AND OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES FROM OUR POSITION.

The three positions—of indefinite erroneousness, the extreme left; absolute inerrancy, the extreme right; and thorough truthfulness and trustworthiness, with Divine authority of all Scripture, the sure and strong middle—having thus been compared and contrasted apologetically, and the second having been proved stronger than the first, and the third stronger than the second, and incomparably stronger than the first; the first and third, the two main antagonistic positions now, are compared along some leading lines of Christian evidence, and the same superiority appears all along; and the importance and value of the truth, reliability, and accuracy, even in minute points, things, and words, are shown in convincing detail, specially in Appendix to Books V. and VI.

And, finally, a brief but massive outline of the Christian evidences is given from our position, to which I invite the serious attention of the sceptic, which I venture to think he will not really grapple with, and which I fear not to say he can never overthrow.

BOOK VI. THE ESSENTIAL RATIONALISM OF ALL THEORIES OF THE INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS OF SCRIPTURE.

Book VI. shows the essential Rationalism of all theories of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture. There is, indeed, no possible logical middle between holding the Bible to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, and rejecting its independent and Divine authority altogether. As has been said, there is no resting-place between the Christian conception of God and Atheism; so there is no rational standing ground between faith in Scripture as the Word of God and agnosticism.

THE SUPREMACY OF REASON OVER REVELATION.

All theories of indefinite erroneousness legitimately tend to, and naturally end in, Rationalism, or the supremacy of Reason over Revelation. This is openly avowed by the teachers of many of them. It is practically exemplified by others less pronounced

in their Rationalism. It is implicitly inherent in many others who would resent the name, and are believers in Revelation, and even evangelical in their faith. Even the least rationalistic of them more or less possess the spirit, imply the principle, and act on the assumptions of Rationalism. However much they may differ in their faith, design, and results, they all assume and proceed on the same principle, tend in the same direction, and logically end at the same termination,—their variation being limited to the applications of the common principle. If the more believing do not arrive at the same results, or issue in the same effects, it is because they are less consistent and thorough-going in their applications, or because they are kept back from the legitimate conclusion by other prepossessions or considerations. The error and fallacy lying at the root of them all is settling by *à priori* ideas and reasonings what Revelation would be, rather than by inquiring what Scripture teaches it is. They are all based upon a limited class of the phenomena of Scripture,—the difficulties, discrepancies, or seeming errors (although all sufficiently accounted for),—and their own unwarrantable inferences therefrom ; instead of upon what must ever be the supreme and decisive elements in settling all doctrines or questions of Scripture—its direct and explicit teaching. And they also ignore the great mass of the chief phenomena.

THEY ALL IGNORE THE BIBLE CLAIM.

They all ignore or minimise the claim the Bible makes for itself. They seldom or never face, far less attempt to answer, the overwhelming mass of evidence by which that claim is established. And they persist in their theory in face of express Bible teaching. They make their theory out of the difficulties of, and the objections to, the true doctrine and the Bible claim,—as if difficulties or objections to any truth were disproof of it, or any valid reason for non-acceptance of it, much less a sufficient basis, or any basis at all, for the opposite theory. All the while they ignore the infinitely greater difficulties of their own. They assume that the *only* design of Scripture is to give a revelation of moral and religious truth, which is not true. It is the chief but not the only end, neither is that the only purpose it serves. From this they infer that it is errant and erroneous in all other things.

Yea, most of them now deny its truth or reliability even in much of these. In any case their inference is as unwarrantable as their assumption is untrue. They assume that an indefinitely erroneous Bible would be as effective for faith and life as a thoroughly true and reliable Bible. This is a big but baseless assumption ; because we could not be sure of what was true and what erroneous. In the very attempt to separate them, we should need to become the judge of God's Word ; and, therefore, lose or weaken its effect.

Besides, it would be deprived of all independent and Divine authority, and would therefore largely lose its power. Some of them to evade this say that they hold it true and authoritative in all that affects faith and life, but not otherwise. But they do not and cannot specifically tell what does and what does not affect faith and life, nor how we can infallibly ascertain that ; and they imply that there are some, yea, many things in Scripture that do not affect faith or life,—which is a direct contradiction of God's Word in its great classical passage on the subject, as of many others (2 Tim. 3¹⁶). The whole Bible affects faith and life. In every part is heard the voice of God.

Others say that it is infallible and authoritative in all that is essential to salvation, but not in anything else. But who can tell what is essential to salvation ? and how can we settle or find out that ? Very little may be essential to salvation. Some of the heathen are in hope and charity supposed to have known enough to save them, though they never saw or read the Bible or heard the gospel. If, therefore, the Bible is infallible and trustworthy only in what is essential to salvation, then it may not be needful at all, and Revelation seems unnecessary, if not a superfluity, is it not at least a non-necessity ?

Others say the Bible is infallible and of Divine authority in all its teaching ; and yet they reject its most explicit teaching on its first and fundamental truth and claim, which underlies and gives authority to all its other teaching ; and they forget that the *whole* Bible teaches, as Christian experience verifies.

And others still hold that the Bible is true, trustworthy, infallible, and of Divine authority in its substance but not in its expression, in its truths but not in its words. But they have not told us how its truths can be known except through the words. The truths are in the words,—the words are the embodiment of

the ideas. We can know nothing of the substance except through the expression. If, and so far as, the one is not true, so also is the other. If the great words—election, redemption, propitiation, atonement, justification by faith, regeneration, repentance, eternal life, resurrection, judgment, heaven, hell, are not true and reliable, then, and in so far as these are untrue or unreliable, so far the realities are so also. Besides, it is the Written Word that is said to be God-breathed (*θεόπνευστος*), and therefore “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3¹⁶).

And if it is alleged that some of the words or expressions are true, reliable, and authoritative, but not others, as is said, then the old unanswerable questions and insoluble difficulties arise—which are true and which false? and how can they be infallibly separated or ascertained? Thus through all the permutations and combinations, and through all the multifarious phases of indefinite erroneousness, we are ever inevitably driven to the old and fatal issues of the common rationalistic principle, namely, that every varying man must become a judge and an authoritative standard himself. Having got rid of an infallible Bible and an infallible Christ, he must reach that supreme absurdity—an infallible Self, “Lord of himself that heritage of woe,” as Byron says.

So that in abandoning the old, true, God-breathed Bible, vainly imagining they were exchanging a worse standard for a better, it is found that there is no real standard left at all, but only ever changeable personal opinion. And earnest souls crying for the light amid the encircling gloom, and a benighted humanity sighing for some guiding star through life to immortality, are cast adrift upon a shoreless sea of chaotic speculation without chart or compass, since its only certain guide—the old and trusted, because thought-to-be trustworthy Bible—is declared to be true or trustworthy no more; and even the solemn sanction and seal of it by the Son of God is said to be insufficient to give it Divine authority, or even to certify its root and foundation claim! So that a bereaved race might well raise a wailing deeper than Cassandra’s for the credulity that might save it from despair.

BOOK VII. DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.
ADDITIONAL CONFIRMATIONS.

Book VII. gives a concise outline of the leading difficulties connected with the Bible claim. In explanation and diminution of them it makes full and cogent use of the notorious and far-reaching fact that there are difficulties connected with truths and facts in every sphere of thought and action, and every phase of experience and life. It shows that they often arise from misconceptions of the urgers of them, and through the mistakes of those who charge the Bible with them, and then father their own errors upon the Word of God. It states the principles on which difficulties are and should be dealt with in all cases; and sets forth the methods by which they may be largely explained. It applies these principles and methods to the difficulties of Scripture in particular, and illustrates in specific cases how they may be accounted for or removed, or at least reasonably left unsolved, and wrong inferences from them prevented. It shows the great lessons they are designed to teach, and the valuable moral ends they are fitted to serve to dependent creatures, amid the limitations of time. It urges the evidence that difficulties supply of the vastness, and the unity of the Divine operations, in every sphere of this activity and self-revelation; and thus avoids the creation of the greatest of all difficulties—the difficulty of being without difficulty—the calamity of having no mystery.

It also takes notice of some chief objections, and shows how often they arise from misapprehensions of the real state of the question, and are the fruit of mistaken prejudice, or the imaginary creations of the objectors. It discloses how insubstantial they often are, how easily many of them can be explained, how feeble at best they mostly are, and how frivolous and despicable they sometimes become. It indicates how much more serious and insuperable are the objections inherently connected with all the theories of erroneousness, with the essential principles of every form of Rationalism, and with the prime postulates of all phases of scepticism. Therefore, there is no credulity so great as the credulity of unbelief. Thus the path of true faith is the path of right reason also. Reason justifies faith as a prime pioneer, and faith confides in reason as a helpful companion.

In discussing these difficulties and objections it further brings out additional confirmations of the main position; and adduces important independent facts and considerations that make it altogether, especially in the light of the expressed faith of the Church Catholic, as fully established a truth as any truth in religion, philosophy, or experience. It finally gives a brief résumé of the whole course of the thought and discussion, and aims at stating as precisely as possible the true doctrine of Holy Scripture, which is undoubtedly the great desideratum of our time, about which many have much difficulty.

The Appendix contains elucidations, corroborations, and illustrations of important points; and gives suggestions and quotations from the immense mass of literature on the questions, both ancient and modern. It also gives concise criticism of the most recent books and utterances on the subject, especially of those that have presumed to criticise and disparage the Word of God, or who have dared to disown or question the Divine authority of the Son of God on the supreme question of religion and ethics.

THE ULTIMATE ISSUES—REASON OR REVELATION? THE NEW BIBLE AND THE OLD.

I had at first entitled this volume "The New Bible and the Old," and I had done so purposely; for the more I have studied recent theories and controversies as to the Word, character, and government of God, the more have I been satisfied that were these theories to be formally adopted by the Church, or even to become widely prevalent, as they now are, among the Christian public, we should have really a new Bible—a Bible differing essentially from the old—a Bible from which God's Word would not, indeed, be altogether excluded, but in which it would be subordinate and unauthoritative; and in which man's reason would be the supreme and only final standard of truth or duty. It would be a Bible in which Divine Revelation would be ultimately subjected to the test of human reason, and valued, or deferred to, only when and in so far as it accorded therewith; and, therefore, entirely deprived of intrinsic, independent, or Divine authority.

VARIOUS THEORIES THE SAME IN ROOT PRINCIPLE.

REASON SUPREME OVER REVELATION.

This might be illustrated at length from a review of most of the speculations and controversies, theories and systems of our times. In some cases this is expressly and emphatically avowed by the modern idolaters of reason; whether it be in Spiritualism, which denies the possibility of a Revelation; or Rationalism, which denies its existence; or Deism, which denies its necessity; or Naturalism, which denies that there is anything supernatural in it; or a Romanism that denies its sufficiency, and supplements it by tradition and infallible Papal interpretation; or a loose Lower Criticism, which limits its range by largely discrediting its text, and by denying or disputing the canonicity or authenticity of many of its books, because they do not come up to its ever-varying standard; or a Rationalistic Higher Criticism, which logically and practically invalidates the whole by indefinitely invalidating parts of it,—because they do not favour its unproved assumptions, agree with its self-made principles, conform to its often arbitrary methods, accord with its oft imaginary results, or harmonise with its problematical hypotheses. All these combine, critic and Romanist, naturalist and deist, infidel and Christian, in avowedly casting down Revelation from its position of Divine supremacy, and in placing, though under different names and with vastly different aims, a bold but often blinded reason on the throne of the God of Revelation.

More frequently this is quietly assumed and acted on by many without its being openly professed, or even consciously present perhaps to their own minds; as in those often crude speculations denying the real efficacy of prayer—virtually discrediting the doctrine of a particular Providence, and logically ending in as complete a dethroning of God from the government of His universe as is made by the Pantheist, who denies the existence of a personal God—a God transcendent over, as well as immanent in all creation; or the atheist, who, because a fool, says there is no God; or the materialist, who recognises no Supreme Being, but matter and its laws, and says of them, “These laws be your gods, O children of men!” Also in those widely prevalent views of the character of God, and of His relation to men, which so treat of His love as to ignore His holiness,

so dwell upon His goodness as to obliterate His justice, so ex-patiate upon His mercy as to evacuate His righteousness; and consequently dispense with the necessity of an atonement in order to the forgiveness of sin; assert God's universal fatherhood by creation making Him the father equally of all—saints and sinners, men and devils, thus denying the necessity of regeneration or the reality of adoption; proclaim the abrogation or non-existence of penal suffering, either in man or man's Redeemer; and fitly and consistently crown the whole with a denial of everlasting punishment—yea, virtually of any punishment at all properly so called—*penal* suffering here or hereafter; and thus annihilate hell, abolish the law of righteousness, and blot out of existence, or at least of thought, a God of holiness, justice, and truth.

Sometimes, without it being avowed or assumed, this is necessarily implied in the statements, theories, and principles of many who are not only unconscious of opposing or undermining the truth or authority of God's Word, but who sincerely believe in them, earnestly wish to uphold them, and most confidently maintain that they themselves are the best and wisest defenders of them. Examples of this may be found in all these recent speculations about Revelation which make it merely or mainly the placing of men with much spiritual insight and deep sympathy with God, in such circumstances as to see God working in providence, enabling them to penetrate into the moral and spiritual significance of what they see, so that they can shrewdly "forecast" the future, and then record these impressions for their own times and the benefit of future ages.

They may also be found in all theories of partial inspiration, whether it be of those who deny and often ridicule what has been called "verbal inspiration," or those who, rejecting "plenary inspiration," contend for various kinds and degrees of inspiration, such as the inspiration of superintendence, elevation, and suggestion; or those who maintain that Scripture is infallible in all its teaching, properly so called, or in teaching on moral and spiritual truth, or in all matters of faith and life, or at least in all essential to man's salvation,—but not infallible except in these—the writers of Scripture being, like other men, fallible in all other things, and having in their writings actually erred; or the "Gospelers," who magnify the Synoptic Gospels to the disparagement of

all else in the N.T.; or all those, who place Christ's teaching above, and in antithesis or antagonism to His Spirit's teaching through the apostles, Whom He Himself promised, in order to their receiving and communicating His highest and final Revelations. These make their own *selections* from the Gospels, or Christ's elementary teaching in the Sermon on the Mount the sum, test, and crown of all Revelation—as expressed in their new and vaunted ethical creeds.

All these opponents of plenary inspiration may be demonstrated to have put reason above Revelation, as really, though not avowedly or intentionally, as the mystic, who gives supremacy to his own imaginary impressions of the meaning of Scripture from its alleged correspondence with his own feelings; or the perfectionist, who attempts to give authority to his own often absurd interpretation by denominating it the teaching of the Spirit; or the Quaker, who gives supremacy to the light within; or the Rationalist, who follows Scripture so far as it agrees with his own consciousness, or his views of the teaching of nature; or the Socinian, who, like Priestley and many moderns, asserts that the Scripture writers were merely credible witnesses, recording like good, ordinary historians their observations and impressions, but without any infallible or special guidance; or the apostles of "sweetness and light," who, like Matthew Arnold, maintain that Scripture abounds in error of every description, but contains some latent truth—the "secret of Jesus"—which, however, only a few experts such as they have been able in any proper measure to discover; or the sceptics, who, like Strauss, assert that Scripture is merely a collection of legendary myths; or, like Baur and the Tübingen "tendency" school, with its modern revivers, Pfeiderer, etc., who place the writers of Scripture in antagonistic schools, to discredit or confuse the whole; or the Ritschlians, who, taking the Gospels, or sometimes only the Synoptic Gospels, as their sources, and their arbitrary selections of the teaching of Jesus there as their test of Christian faith, discredit the other N.T. writings, disown or ignore the apostolic interpretation of Christ and His teaching to substitute their own presumed superior interpretation of His consciousness,—which presents only a truncated Christianity, without root in pre-existent Godhead or fruit in resurrection glory, and in which the whole miraculous elements are eliminated, the supernatural denied, and the

weightiest of His utterances and the highest claims of Christ in these very Gospels are set aside ; or the naturalists, who deny any inspiration whatever, except the natural effect of special providential circumstances raising some to a higher degree of religious consciousness than ordinary men ; or the lowest infidels, like Tom Paine, who not only refuse to admit any superiority to Scripture, but impugn its veracity, attack its morality, and coarsely ridicule the whole system of truth it reveals.

NO RATIONAL RESTING-PLACE BETWEEN THE TRUTHFULNESS
OF SCRIPTURE AND THE SUPREMACY OF REASON OVER
REVELATION.

I know that many who hold the less pronounced views of the erroneousness of Scripture will strongly object to be, in this respect, classified with avowed Rationalists and infidels ; and will strenuously maintain that their views do not amount, or approach, or tend to placing reason above Revelation. And I cordially admit that they do not intend this ; that they design the very opposite ; that they are fully convinced they are taking up the best and only tenable position for maintaining the Divine supremacy of Revelation or the truth of Christianity. And I gladly own that some of them have indeed constructed from other standpoints and in other ways some valuable defences of the Christian faith. Nevertheless, it is shown that however much they may differ from these in many important matters, and though they hold with us the core of the Christian faith, yet in this vital and radical matter, which underlies all the other matters, there is no essential difference ; that they are all radically the same in their Rationalistic principle ; and that there is no possible resting-place for any clear and thoroughgoing mind between holding the thorough truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture, and holding explicitly or implicitly the supremacy of reason over Revelation ; and, therefore, rejecting altogether the independent Divine authority, and even the veracity, of the Word of God, and consequently of the Son of God.

To this disastrous conclusion we are driven by the fact that the Bible claims, and is proved to claim, this for itself ; and makes this the basis of all its other claims, the ground of all its

other revelations. Therefore the rejection of that claim made by Scripture and endorsed by Christ is tantamount to a rejection of the religious authority of both, leaves us without any real authority or standard at all, and makes unbelief reasonable and agnosticism a logical necessity.

In showing this, and in the manner of urging it, I am not insensible to the danger of seeming to put weapons into the hands of the foes of our faith. For at various stages I, as stated, reason as I conceive a sceptic, from the errorists' views and principles, would be entitled to reason, and follow out the argument to its legitimate issues. For this the upholders of an unscriptural and unscientific theory, and the apologists of an untenable and subversive position, must be held responsible. For they have wittingly or unwittingly raised in their false theories of Scripture the whole question of the reality of revelation and the truth of Christianity. There is no peril to our faith if men will only take up and stand by the position set forth in Scripture. But when Christian apologists, either from a false expediency, seeking to conciliate sceptics at the cost of truth, or from a fancied improvement of the position of defence, make admissions not necessary to be made, and abandon positions all important to be held; and in doing so construct theories, adopt principles, and follow methods which, if thoroughly prosecuted and powerfully urged, would destroy the Written Word, and discredit the Incarnate Word of God, and undermine the Christian faith, it is well, even at the risk of seeming to aid the foe by, in his name, pressing the advantages so unwisely given him, to show how he can thus make an open way into the very citadel of the faith, lay the powerful lever forged for him by Christian theorists beneath the very foundations of our religion, and easily lay in ruins the whole glorious structure so long thought to be impregnable; and deprive a seeking and sorrowing humanity of its one sure rest and refuge, in which it found its Saviour and its Father-God. If yielding apologists and rationalising theorists can thus be convinced of the danger of their tactics and the indefensibleness of their positions, real service may be ultimately rendered to the cause of truth and the Kingdom of God, even though temporarily the common foe may seem to profit by the differences of its friends.

FOR CHRISTIANITY ITSELF THERE IS NOTHING TO FEAR.

For Christianity itself there is nothing to fear ; for it is true, and the God of truth is on its side. Its foes may rage with all the fierce malignity and assail with all the perverse ingenuity that have ever characterised them. Its friends may differ and contend, and sometimes seem more zealous against each other than against the common foe. Ever and anon in the course of their contests, and through the manifold infirmities even of great and God-fearing men, important though temporary advantages may, through the temerity of some and the flexibility of others, be given to the ever-watchful foes of the faith. And sometimes through the enmity and skill and prowess of these Philistines, those advantages so needlessly and foolishly given may be so earnestly seized and so vigorously pressed that they may seem to be cutting, even with Christian-forged instruments, a clear way up to the very walls of Zion, and into the very citadel of our salvation, threatening to lay the ancient strongholds of Christianity, venerable with the glory of age and strong in the victories and conquests of centuries, prostrate in the dust. Thus for a time the truth may be obscured, maligned, and seemingly crushed ; and round the hoary battlements of Christendom the dark and lurid clouds of impending destruction may ominously appear to be gathering for its final overthrow.

But it is only for a time. Magna est veritas et prevalebit—"Great is truth, and it shall prevail." Christianity has nothing to dread from her adversaries, nor can even the controversies or errors of her upholders permanently injure her. In spite of friend and foe she must ultimately prevail on earth, and have her claims and honour owned by all mankind.

From true reason she apprehends no evil, but confidently anticipates much aid ; for right reason and Divine Revelation, both the offspring and servants of God, and having respectively a sphere and work of their own in God's vast kingdom, can never really conflict with each other, or for any length of time even appear to do so ; but must ultimately, each working in its own proper province and after its own peculiar way, ever stand side by side as valuable and complementary companions ; and, labouring together in blissful harmony, do noble service in the advancement of the same vast kingdom and for the honour of

the same great Lord. From investigation she has nothing evil to fear, but everything good to expect ; for the more thoroughly she has been examined in the clear strong light of day, and the more fully and searchingly she has been scrutinised in the fierce, cross lights of science and philosophy, history and experience, the more have the vastness of her resources and the riches of her treasures been discovered, the more have the strength of her bulwarks and the immovableness of her foundations been disclosed, and the more have the righteousness of her claims and the glory of her greatness been set forth. From controversy she need not shrink, nor at the prospect of it be dismayed ; for hitherto she has come out of it not only unscathed but triumphant, and has gathered new strength and reaped fresh glory in the many battles she has fought and the many victories she has won in the many contests of many generations.¹

She has nothing to fear, nothing to hide ; for weakness she is free of, and secrets she has none ; and, therefore, calm in the confidence of her own Divine stability, and fearless in the plenitude of her own untold resources, frank in the consciousness of her own inherent righteousness, and buoyant in the prospect of her own final triumph, she, unabashed, can meet her enemies in the gate, invite the broadest light of day to search through all her mysteries, and boldly challenge all her foes.

Though her followers and her forms, and all the outward, magnificent evidences of her existence and monuments of her greatness were in one wild blaze to be consumed to-morrow, she would, phoenix-like, rise from her ashes on the following day a nobler and diviner bird than ever. And though for a little truth might be driven to the wall and error appear to prevail, and infidelity, ever eager to proclaim its fancied triumph, were beginning vainly to raise its haughty head to revel o'er the grave of an extinct Christianity, and to sing a mocking requiem for her eternal repose, the mirth would be premature and the triumph be but short. For, like her Lord, in spite of earth and hell, rising from the dead on the third day, she would rise again from her grave in greater power and grander glory than ever ; or like the granite mountain that unmoved has stood for ages among the raging waves, when buried for a little beneath the foam of furious tempests, it soon raises its majestic head

¹ See Dr. Chalmers' *Astronomical Discourses*.

amid the billows, and when the storms are past and the winds are hushed to rest, only stands out more calmly and grandly than before. Hers are the naked majesty of truth, and the transparency and nobility of conscious rectitude and greatness. To her belong all the weight and the glory of age, without any of its unloveliness or infirmities. And whether she has to contend with the powers of the world or the prejudices of the Church, with the arrogance of science or the pride of philosophy, with the haughtiness of criticism or the boastfulness of Rationalism, the malignity of scepticism,—yea, with all the principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, she does so in the native vigour of her own Divine strength, and with the spiritual power of her own heaven-forged weapons, despising all the artifices of carnal wisdom or cowardly expediency, and spurning all the props and expedients of imbecility away from her; for

“God in the midst of her doth dwell,
Nothing shall her remove;
The Lord to her an helper will,
And that right early prove.”

BOOK I.

CHRIST'S PLACE IN THEOLOGY, AND CHRIST AND THE CONTROVERSIES.



CHAPTER I.

THE PROMINENCE OF CHRIST IN RECENT THEOLOGY.

THIS book is in some parts and aspects preliminary to the main subject of this volume. In others it is primary and fundamental in itself and in relation to all the questions considered here, yea, in connection with the leading religious questions of our age. The chief and specific subject of this volume is whether the Bible is the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority ; and what is Christ's relation thereto, and Jesus' teaching thereon ? Where is the seat of authority in religion, and what is Christ's position as a religious teacher ? These supreme and radical questions, or rather various aspects and relations of the one prime root question, form the main portion of this book. But it also treats of other leading truths of the Christian faith, and of Christ's teaching on them. These are, however, all-important in themselves, and of special importance in our time, when almost every vital principle and cardinal doctrine of our religion is being denied, or depreciated, or ignored by many calling themselves Christian. So that Christ's teaching on them is of the highest moment and most timely now, especially as to those most controverted. Besides, all these are radically connected with this fundamental question. It underlies them all, and arises with each of them.

THE STANDPOINT. CHRIST'S INFALLIBILITY AS A TEACHER.

This book also raises the supreme, prime question—on which all other questions in theology and religion, and even in ethics, depend—in the most serious and arrestive manner, approaches it by the best avenue, and presents it for decision in the aspect most likely to be conclusive and to bring finality to all who own the Divinity of Christ or the authority of Jesus' teaching. The teaching of Jesus is, in fact, the great cry of our day; and that, too, by many who openly impugn, violently assail, and sometimes scornfully reject what is really His teaching,—though under other names. But since they appeal to Cæsar,—to Christ, not only as against uninspired teachers, but as against His sent and Spirit-filled Prophets and Apostles, whose teaching He inspired and endorsed,—to Cæsar they shall go, and we shall joyfully go with them.

CHRIST'S PLACE IN MODERN THOUGHT AND RELIGIOUS LIFE.

Nothing is more remarkable or precious in recent religious thought and life than the central and unique position given to Christ Himself. Never, perhaps, since the primitive Christian times, when the personal Jesus was all in all, has the consciousness of a living Christ so much pervaded and dominated religious thought, life, and literature as now. As He was the Alpha in the first ages, so He is fast becoming the Omega in these last times. The tide and passion of our time flow strongly Christward. Round Himself, rather than any lesser centre, recent theological ideas gather and crystallise. From Him, rather than from any abstract truth or principle, leaders of Christian thought and activity draw their inspiration and derive their power. Doubtless in every age Christ has been more or less directly the heart and motive power of Christianity; and the burning, creative souls who have made and moulded new eras, and pulsed fresh life and influence adown all after ages, have derived their fire and force from fellowship with Him.

But when we leave the fulness and vitality infused into and permeating the primitive ages by the conscious nearness of a risen, living Lord; when Christianity, like a river in full flood issuing from its fountain, breathed and teemed with a unique

realisation of the presence and spirit of a personal Christ,—the fragrance of which has lingered through the ages, and refreshes the Church to day,—we find that doctrine *about* Christ, rather than Christ Himself, more and more takes the pre-eminence. The controversies with the early heretics and sceptics unconsciously tended to this. The first great controversy as to the Person and Divinity of Christ, though unavoidable, and in its ultimate results invaluable, nevertheless somewhat diverted men's thoughts and affections from our Lord Himself to words and phrases, discussions and creeds about Him. During the Augustinian age religious thought, through the Pelagian and cognate controversies, was turned largely away from theology proper to anthropology; and though great and lasting service was done for truth and the Church thereby, a personal, ever-present Jesus, with the glory of His unique personality and the preciousness of His ever-living presence with His people, became less and less realised. Through the Middle Ages He was largely lost sight of, and thought of Him was replaced by the cultivation and development of formalism and sacerdotalism, by the creation of purgatory, and the establishment of the Papacy. Even at the Reformation, inestimable and enduring though its achievements for truth and liberty were, it was more the work of Christ, and that, too, in its bearing mainly on man's justification—one section of soteriology—than the living Christ Himself that stood forth with greatest prominence. In the seventeenth century, when the Dutch and Puritan divines laid the Church under everlasting obligations for the unparalleled services rendered to Scripture exposition and experimental religion, it was not so much a personal Christ as the covenant of grace—not so much the living Jesus as the eternal purpose, that formed the centre and burden of their thought and teaching.

And it is only in recent times, and largely within the present generation,—mainly within the last decade of the nineteenth century, that Christ Himself—the Divine Man Christ Jesus—has resumed, or begun to resume, something of His primitive pre-eminence and central position in religious thought, Christian life, and theological literature.

THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS CHRIST-CENTRED THEOLOGY.

At this every Christian heart should rejoice. By this much has been gained in every way. It places at the centre and heart of the whole scheme of salvation, instead of any abstract doctrine or system of truth, Him to whom as "The Truth" that position truly belongs, and who alone can properly occupy it; and makes Him, what by the Father's appointment and the fitness of things He is, both the foundation and the chief corner-stone,—both the centre and the heart of the whole scheme of God's salvation. It gives unity and life to the entire revelations of grace; and makes every part and particle of it pulsate with Divine vitality, and breathe with the vivifying Personality of our Brother God and Redeeming Saviour. It imparts that perennial newness and everlasting freshness to religious truth which issues from Him as our Divine-human Redeemer and ever-living Lord, and is infused into everything of which He is the head, and heart, and centre, and glory. It prevents that fatal tendency and life-evaporating habit which ever endanger the mere scientific treatment of abstract doctrine; and which has often turned the sacred science of systematic theology—the *scientia scientiarum*—into unhallowed and profitless contention about the dry bones of theological dogma.

It gives Him the unique position which is His, and was predestined for Him in nature, providence, and grace. In nature, as the whole progress of creation and development of life on our globe pointed to, prepared for, aspired after, and is at length terminated and consummated in Him, as the end and crown, and Lord and glory of all creation. In providence, as all the events of history and the evolutions of ages march ever forward towards Him, and conspire to make Him manifest as the Father of the ages, and the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. In grace, as Revelation, from its earliest dawn to its full meridian, pointed to Him as its goal, and sum, and glory; and the Church, from its first germ to its final perfection, has had, as its main function and chief end, to reveal His grace and magnify His name as God manifest in the flesh, of whom, and to whom, and through whom are all things, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." And it helps, further, to realise the purpose of the ages—that mankind may see, receive, trust, and love its Saviour

and its Lord ; and thus, through the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, may know and live the life eternal, and realise, in a deeper sense than ever poet dreamed of, that "one increasing purpose through the ages runs"; and take their place and act their part in hastening on that "one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves."

This significant fact may well rejoice the heart of Christendom to-day, as it is of itself sufficient to immortalise our age. Like the coming of a new spring, it breathes fresh life and joyous expectation into all our Christian thought, activity, and literature after all the vicissitudes and controversies of many centuries ; and promises to the Church and the world a revival of primitive Christianity, and a rejuvenescence of mankind. It is, indeed, a true dayspring from on high that hath visited us as we near the dawn of another century ; which may well halo the coming age with glory to the eye of faith, enable the ear of love to hear the songs of Paradise echoing over a renovated world, make the heart of the daughter of Zion shout for gladness, and fill each Christian soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

THE ABUSES OF THIS. DISPARAGING THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES, AND DISCREDITING SCRIPTURE.

Nevertheless, even this most precious pre-eminence of a personal living Christ, which is the most distinguishing characteristic and crowning glory of our age, and will remain its best memorial and service to mankind, has been abused to the prejudice of the truth as it is in Jesus ; and that, too, by those who claim to glory supremely in the fact, and have assumed most ostentatiously this attitude. They have cried—"Away with dogma, and let us have Jesus. Be done with creed, and give us Christ. Make less of the Scriptures and more of the Saviour. We would get past the Bible and see Jesus." As if we could know anything of Jesus without the Bible ! As if our whole knowledge of Him was not drawn from the Scriptures ; and, therefore, by how much soever we impinge on their integrity or weaken their authority, by so much precisely we mutilate our conception, lessen our faith, and render impossible our sure knowledge of Him. They forget that it was He Himself who said, "Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of

Me" (John 5³⁹) ; and showed His disciples, after His resurrection, "in *all* the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24²⁷). They appear to be unblissfully ignorant of the fact that when worthy of the name, "creed" is simply the orderly statement of the system of truth revealed about Him for our salvation ; and "dogma" the accurate doctrinal embodiment of the truth as it is in Jesus.

THE APPEAL TO CHRIST FATAL TO THE DISPARAGERS OF SCRIPTURE AND ITS WRITERS.

But those who deride creed and despise dogma are the last that should make much of Jesus or His teaching. For of all the dogmatists that ever taught, He was the most dogmatic ; and of all the teachers or preachers that ever opened their lips, He was the most decisive, authoritative, and emphatic, especially on the Divine supremacy of the Bible, and in His unqualified belief of all therein when truly interpreted. He was, too, supremely majestic and most solemnly absolute on the inviolable truthfulness and Divine authority of all Scripture—every part and element "jot and tittle" thereof (Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁸). Herein is a marvellous thing, that Jesus was Himself the most decided, emphatic, and ineluctable teacher that ever lived and taught ; and spoke with such unique authority and absolute dogmatism as no one, inspired or uninspired, has ever approached to. And what is still more remarkable is that it is just on the doctrines that have been most controverted, specially those most assailed in our time, that He has spoken with greatest decisiveness, unquestionable ineluctableness, and majestic solemnity ;—as if, foreseeing the controversies of the coming ages, He had purposely prepared His own Divine words to meet and settle them ; and cast the weight of His own Divine authority into the breaches that He knew would be attempted to be made on these doctrines ; so as to shut up all who owned Him to believe them ; and thus to put before all men the solemn alternative of receiving them or rejecting Him.

This fact, which can be demonstrated from His very words, habitual usage and attitude, and which every careful student of Scripture must have been impressed with, and which even the most cursory reader could scarcely fail to note, looks hard, crushingly hard, upon all those who seem to make much of

Christ to disparage Scripture, who magnify Jesus to denounce dogma, who profess to honour Him that they may the better dishonour His Word, and disparage the prophets and apostles whom He sent, and inspired to reveal His will and write His Word.

It may well make them and all pause and ponder to read His awful and majestic words, "Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life : and they are they which testify of Me" (John 5³⁹). "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5¹⁸). "He that heareth you, heareth Me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me" (Luke 10¹⁶). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24³⁵). "He that receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12⁴⁸).

CHRIST ENDORSES WITH HIS DIVINE AUTHORITY ALL THE LEADING DOCTRINES ASSAILED, SPECIALLY HOLY SCRIPTURE.

But it will be asked on what controverted doctrines has Christ spoken with such decision, solemnity, and authority? Looking back on the whole history of controversy during these eighteen centuries, the answer might generally in substance be—on *all* the main doctrines controverted since the dawn of the Christian era, and supremely on the inviolable truthfulness, absolute trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture. This might be well illustrated by following the order in which the controversies as to the leading doctrines have arisen in the history of the Church ; especially as the historical order largely coincides with the natural and scientific order. For it is a remarkable and suggestive fact that the usual, because the natural, is the scientific order of treatment of doctrine in systems of theology. In its great divisions and chief subjects it is substantially the same as the historical order of discussion as given in histories of doctrine. First, Theology (proper)—God. Second, Anthropology—Man. Third, Soteriology—Salvation. Fourth, Eschatology—The Future Life. The history of discussion is thus the order of science. And as the Church followed this order unintentionally, just as the controversies arose, it appears that, all unconsciously to herself, God has led her historically through a

regular course of systematic theology, taking the subjects in their proper scientific order.¹ So that the Church ought to be completing her theological education in these last times; and leaving to these noisy neophytes, who have neither studied Scripture nor mastered theology, that recent plethora and noxious growth of crude jejunities and crass aberrations which they innocently name "recent rediscoveries" of Christ, though mostly only new forms of old exploded errors, or sheer absurdities.

¹ Hugh Miller, in his famous work, *The Testimony of the Rocks*, has an interesting parallel in science to this in theology. He shows "the wonderful parallelism which exists between the Divine and the human systems of classification, when the Divine idea embodied by the Creator of all in geologic history, and the human idea embodied by the zoologists and botanists in their respective systems" are compared; and which is all the more "marvellous that the geologists who have discovered the one had no hand in assisting the naturalists and phytologists who framed the other." He draws the inference "that we have a new argument for an identity in constitution and quality of the Divine and the human minds, the result of that creative act by which God formed man in His own image." He also urges the further inference in favour of the action therein of a *personal*, as against the pantheist's fiction of an *impersonal* God in the original arrangement, "seeing that only *persons* (like Cuvier) could have ever wrought out for themselves the real arrangement of the scheme."

Both these inferences from the old creation are confirmed by the not less wonderful parallelism in the new creation between the course of scientific arrangement in systems of theology naturally formed, and the course of doctrinal discussion actually followed in the history of the Church as exhibited in histories of doctrine:—especially as both courses originated and progressed independently, and yet both followed a marvellously similar course, and the same scientific because natural order.

This, too, surely warrants the further inferences, and supplies fresh evidence of the following truths:—

First. That by a gracious providence God has been leading the Church in its advancing history into the knowledge and experience of the truths of Revelation in a scientific because the natural order;—a providence the graciousness of which is all the more manifest in the light of the fact that it is by this experimental knowledge and consequent appreciation of the truth that the spiritual life and fruitfulness of the Church are best promoted.

Second. That in the progress of both the physical and the spiritual creation God in His providence, which aims specially at the good of His people, ever acts and advances all along the lines of the laws of thought implanted in them when He created them in His own likeness; and that, therefore, the path to true future progress in the knowledge of the truth and the development of the Christian life is, as in the progress of science, not, like some, by absurdly destroying or discrediting what God has graciously led His Church into the knowledge and experience of, but by more truly and fully realising and utilising that, and making it the root and starting-point, under the same Divine guidance, of further progress more and more unto the perfect day.

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S PLACE AS A RELIGIOUS TEACHER.

BEFORE giving Christ's teaching on the other leading truths, it is well to consider an important preliminary question which is at the basis of all, and which has recently come into unique prominence, viz.:—What is Christ's place as a teacher in religion and ethics? By this is meant not so much His place as compared with the great teachers of the other leading religions of the world; for here He is unquestionably supreme, and confessedly stands out peerlessly alone as at least the greatest religious genius of the race: and whether we think of Mahomet or Gautama, Confucius or Laoutsze, Socrates or Plato,—the Light of Asia, or the Light of Europe, or any other light,—He shines out a lonely splendour as the Light of the world. Giving all of them their highest place, it still remains beyond dispute, as the poet sings—

“They are but broken lights of Thee;
And Thou, O Lord! art more than they.”

But it is His place as compared with other inspired teachers—the prophets, apostles, and evangelists—that has recently assumed an unprecedented prominence in religious thought and literature; and on which some valuable, and much unwise and erroneous teaching has been issued.

Four distinct stages are recognisable in the Church's study of her Lord. In the early Christian ages the Person of Christ was the great subject of thought and controversy; till, in the fourth century, its doctrine of His Divine-human Personality was formulated, which remains unchanged until this day. At the Reformation the work of Christ—specially His redemptive work, as the ground of the justification of all who believe—formed the theme of profound thought and keen discussion between the Reformers and the Romanists; and the doctrine of

justification by faith, then so thoroughly formed and so powerfully enforced, continues, unaltered, to be the teaching of evangelical Christianity until this hour. In the larger part of this century the special subject of study has been the life and character of Christ, embodied in a vast and rich literature. With unprecedented means of study and thoroughness of research, every scene and circumstance of His life has been so seized and realised; and through unexampled exhaustiveness of investigation by the best scholarship, every element and fragment of the gospel history has been so appreciated that, with a vividness and reality never attained since apostolic days, the Man Christ Jesus has been made to live again before our eyes; so that men have felt, as in the days of old, the Divine fascination of His unique Personality, and have had their hearts drawn to Him by a resistless spell as they beheld His glory, and saw in Him "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

It is in the close of this century, and specially in its last decade, that the teaching of Jesus has so intensely engaged special study, and become so fascinating and fruitful. This has given it all the benefits of the thoroughness, exhaustiveness, individualisation, and vividness characteristic of specialism. It has also exposed it to the tendencies and perils of specialisation, —one-sidedness, exaggeration, isolation, and erroneous inference from limited induction. Both these have in this case become apparent, and demand attention.

THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND RELIGIOUS VALUE OF THIS SPECIAL STUDY OF CHRIST'S TEACHING.

This special study of the teaching of Christ has unquestionably given us a more definite and vivid view of it than when mixed up, as in theological systems, with the specific teaching of the apostles, and taken as a part of the general N.T. Revelation,—although it is in full harmony with the one, and is a vital part of the other. It also gives us a clearer and more complete conception of the gospel as preached by Christ Himself, who is both its subject and its end. Its very individualisation makes it stand out with a completeness and a sharpness that is very impressive and memorable, like the vivid outline of a clear,

majestic mountain against the radiant western sky at sunset. One seems to hear the very voice of the Master, and to see the benign radiance of His face, the love-filled look of His eyes, and the very motion of His holy lips, as "the gracious words proceeded out of His mouth," which made the people wonder, and exclaim, "Never man spake like this man." We both hear and see Jesus, and learn from Himself what the gospel truly is; and how the Divine Father really feels to His prodigal children, as revealed by Him who is at once the brightness of His Father's glory, and our true Brother Saviour.

It enables us to see what profound depths of spiritual meaning, and far-reaching horizons of Divine Revelation were treasured up in those radiant previsions of the coming Christ, embodied in the ancient Scriptures, as patriarchs hoped, and prophets spake, and psalmists sang from age to age, as light more clearly shone, and hope more hopeful grew. It shows what a Divine significance lay hid, half revealed but half concealed, in all those rites and symbols, events and ordinances that God appointed in Israel; by which they saw as through a glass darkly enough to find salvation; but which He, as the Sun of Righteousness, so illumined and transfused by His unique irradiations, that they became like these vast masses of trailing, nimbus clouds which have long hovered o'er the heavens, till the westering sun so irradiates and transfuses them with his effulgent beams that they transform the heavens into such a scene of glowing splendour, and wrap the earth in such brilliancy of reflected glory as is overpowering in its grandeur, and make one wonder how the new heavens and the new earth can excel it in glory. And, to vary the figure, it so fills and floods each part and fragment of that ancient Revelation with such untold spiritual significance that it is like the fulness of a great ocean tide, filling and flooding each bay and creek, each cavern and tidal river, with the vivifying fulness of its flow, as it rushes grandly from the fountains of the great deep.

THE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN CHRIST'S TEACHING. HIS GROWING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE TRUTH.

What immensely increases the profound meaning and religious value of all this to us is that what He thus taught was

not merely the expression of unique knowledge, but also the outcome of prayerful study and personal experience of the truth in these Scriptures of which He was the burden and the goal, the author and the fulfiller. This we, too, may still have through the use of the same means, and by the illumination of the same Spirit, who inspired them and Him to know and to unfold them, and is ready to inspire us also to understand and appreciate both them and Him more and more unto the perfect day. For it is only as we experimentally know Him, and the truth as it is in Him (which we do only gradually, line by line, truth after truth), that we really know the truth or Him, as He meant us to know it, or realise their full and purposed saving power.

It further helps us to ascertain and realise the progress in the knowledge and experience of the truth in His own soul. For there can be little doubt that as from the beginning so to the close His human mind grew in wisdom, and in the experimental knowledge of the truth, as He studied and utilised the Father's Word, pondered the deep things of God, and experienced the Divine discipline of providence for the perfection of His knowledge as well as the development of His character, and the cultivation of His powers to their full maturity. It has been usual to note progressiveness in the revelation of Scripture as a whole, and recently progress has been noted in the individual inspired writers and writings, as in Paul. But it is still more significant to mark and ponder progress both in the teaching and experience of the God-Man—the supreme Teacher,—the advancing teaching being rooted in and springing from the growing religious experience of the Man Christ Jesus; so that what we get from Jesus is experimental teaching—the outward expression of His growing inward spiritual experience, like a stream flowing spontaneously from a deep and ever-deepening fountain.

A distinct advance in His teaching is clearly traceable in the Gospels, from the more elementary teaching of the earlier stages of His earthly life, as seen, for example, in the more rudimentary ethical teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, to the higher spiritual teaching of the later stages, as specially exemplified in the Gospel of John. And there is a very marked advance in His teaching, and in the revelations made to His disciples after His resurrection. It is the blessed fruit to Him as well as to them of that profound and pregnant experience of death and

resurrection,—awful and surprising, but uniquely fruitful and divinely significant to Himself as well as to us. The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering; and as the most awful part of the process of His perfection was from the garden of sorrow to the grave of Joseph, so it was also to Him the most profoundly significant, richest in revelation, supremely deepening in spiritual experience, most enriching in personal character, and pre-eminently fruitful in deep, rich, and tender teaching. "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered"; and as the deepest depths of these sufferings were the seasons and spheres as well as the means of His highest learnings and most unique enrichments; so they were also the fountains of His profoundest and most precious teachings, the rootings of His richest and most Divine revelations. So also should our Gethsemane and Calvary be. So indeed they will be if we learn of Him. So indeed they have been so far as we have done so, and in them and through them the more deeply entered into His and Him,—into the fellowship of His sufferings, and the significance of His teachings rooted there; and into likeness of experience, yielding oneness of life, sympathy, and teaching.

Doubtless the advance in teaching after the resurrection was due partly to the fact that His disciples were not earlier able to receive His teaching as to His death and resurrection, with the infinite depths and heights of revelation there; partly to the fact that He Himself was prevented by the very nature of these events from unfolding their full Divine significance until they had actually taken place; and partly also because, like a wise Master builder, He would begin His teaching at the foundation, and proceed in a steadily advancing course,—though in the Gospels the successive steps are not as in scientific treatises boldly bodied forth, but like nature beautifully clothed, and largely concealed from the cursory reader, by the engaging variety and colour, and by the individualising interest and rich suggestiveness of each part when taken by itself. Yet they gradually disclose themselves in the most engaging and instructive way to the careful student, who has grasped this root idea, and follows it along its fruitful and fascinating course.

Nevertheless, this advance in thought and revelation in our Lord's teaching is, doubtless, also owing to the ever-growing

knowledge and experience in His human soul of the whole truth and counsel of God, under the unction of the Holy Ghost and the discipline of His gracious Father. So that the teaching of Christ is, when thus apprehended, a threefold revelation to us:—*first*, of the specific truths He taught in His own unique way; *second*, of His own growth in knowledge and experience of the truth as exhibited in His advancing teaching; *third*, in the guidance and inspiration thus given to us to follow in the same way, and thus to grow up to the stature of men in Christ through the experimental knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

CHRIST'S PLACE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF REVELATION.

Further still, it aids us to ascertain and realise Christ's position in the development of Revelation. Clearly He stands at the climax and close, as He is Himself the crown, and end, and glory of all the revelations of God. As at His coming, life in its ever-ascending march took a new leap upward to its highest pinnacle, and in Him who was the Life it touched and embraced its author; and as history, ever advancing to Him who was its guide and goal, then entered on a new departure and higher plane, to be ever after advancing on distinctively Christian lines; and as providence, ever reaching forward in its marvellous marchings under Him who was the Father of the ages, then reached the realisation of the purpose of the ages—even that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. So Revelation then took a great bound forward, made a unique leap upward, attained its zenith, reached its climax, and assumed its crown, in Him who was the Head and ideal of the creation of God, the centre and goal of the providence of God, and the burden and glory of the Revelation of God.

In Him not only were the previsions of patriarchs realised, and the prefigurations of the Law fulfilled, and the predictions of the prophets accomplished, and the presages of psalmists embodied and glorified; but Revelation entered on a new stage, leaped to its highest elevation, reached its perfect embodiment, and put on its ideal diadem, when the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and men beheld His glory—"the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Not only was a new and effulgent light shed upon the ancient Revela-

tion, and a fresh and far-reaching fulness of life and meaning poured into the previous manifestations of Himself made by God to His people, but new and unique revelations of the most important nature were given by Him—as to the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man; of Trinity in the unity of the Godhead, and the incarnation of the Eternal Son as the Messiah; of the redemption in Christ, and the Person and work of the Holy Ghost; of the sin of man, and the grace of God; of the regeneration and justification of sinners; of the sonship of believers, and perfection in Christ; of the kingdom of God, and the millennial glory; of death and resurrection; of judgment to come, and the final destinies—eternal life and eternal death; of the Devil and his angels, and the children of the wicked one; of the heavenly glory, and the eternal home of the children of God. These and other cognate truths are either in themselves new revelations, or were so uniquely taught by Christ as to be felt and recognised as both new and marvellous.

CHRIST HOLDS A SUPREME AND UNIQUE PLACE AS A TEACHER, AND IN THE PROGRESS OF REVELATION.

So that compared with, and in relation to all the previous inspired teachers, whether patriarchs or prophets, lawgivers or psalmists, righteous men or wise men, Christ undoubtedly stands out far above all peerlessly alone, and holds a place and has played a part in the development of Revelation that is unique, and is by right as in fact His own. Scripture everywhere teaches and assumes this; for though “the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Wise though Solomon was, a wiser as well as a greater than Solomon was He who in O.T. and in N.T. is called “the wisdom of God,” in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And God, who in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets, is said, by way of supremacy and finality, in these last days to have spoken unto us by His Son; and so spake through Him as to constrain men in all ages to say with those who heard Him, “Never man spake like this man.” And the Church is said to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the *chief* corner-stone” (Eph. 2²⁰),—that is, on the teaching of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself

being the great Chief Teacher, as well as the Rock on which God builds His Church. As He is "the Prince of the kings of the earth," "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and the "Great High Priest," to whom all other priests are inferior and subordinate, so, as in kingship and priesthood, in His prophethood He is the Supreme Prophet—the Teacher sent from God—"that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

And what is in these and many passages clearly taught or implied in relation to the prophets and other writers of the O.T., is in these and countless places implied and assumed of Him in relation to the apostles and the other inspired writers of the N.T.,—the Lord of the apostles, as well as the God of the prophets:—*Within, however, the limits necessarily implied in His position*, and the limitations voluntarily assumed in the circumstances of His life and the interests of His work, and expressly declared by Himself, as stated below.

This pre-eminence and supremacy our Lord is manifestly conscious of, implies it in many utterances, and assumes it throughout His teaching. He claims the right to interpret the O.T. Scriptures in His own unique way, and to declare authoritatively what they were intended to teach; and exposes the errors of traditional interpretation with an assurance and authority all His own, as His hearers were impressed with. He also exercised as His unquestionable right His authority to add to, alter, and even to abolish some of the things previously taught and practised, in order to give place to the higher things they prefigured, and by which they were fulfilled. He developed the principles, deepened the spirituality, broadened the application, and put new and unthought of meanings into parts of the ancient Scriptures—though never contrary to or condemnatory of the inspired Scriptures; and He put His own teaching in contrast as on a higher moral and spiritual plane than other ancient teaching. In short, He claimed the right to interpret, revise, use, and reset the O.T. in His own unique way. This may be seen in the "I say unto you" passages in the Sermon on the Mount. He shows the defects and imperfections, the temporary nature and merely permissive character of some of the old legislation and usage, which were necessitated or permitted because of the hardness of their heart, and the low religious state and crude moral ideas and practices of those times of ignorance; claiming

even to be as the Son of Man Lord of the Sabbath day, in reply to the Pharisaical critics. And He did all this with such an air of independent right, and such a tone of absolute authority as struck all, but no one ever dared to imitate, and few presumed to dispute.

As with the prophets of the O.T., so with the apostles of the N.T. He was their Master, they were His servants. He was their Lord, they were His disciples. He was their Teacher, they were His scholars—often dull and slow learners indeed. From first to last this was His and their attitude and relationship, as exhibited throughout the Gospels. His teaching was ever to them supreme and unique, and became their fountain and their rule of life. His words were often on their lips, ever in their memories, treasured in their hearts, and followed in their lives; and found, therefore, large record in the Gospels and tender reminiscence otherwise. He Himself emphasised the importance of His words, not merely as His own words, but as the words of the Father who sent Him. To His disciples He made them the test of discipleship—"Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" the means to knowledge and freedom—"If ye continue in My words, ye shall know the truth: and the truth shall make you free"; the path to power in prayer—"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you"; the source of inspiration and life—"The words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life." And He told them that one chief thing the Holy Spirit would do for them when He came was, "He shall bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

So that His words and teaching contained the germs or substance of much, or most that they ever after taught or did. To men generally, too, He made much of His words. Who has not been impressed with that weighty and significant refrain, so often on His lips, with which He closes His parables and His Epistles to the Seven Churches—"He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear"? In His most solemn and majestic close of the Sermon on the Mount, under the figures of the builders on the rock and the sand, He makes men's eternal destiny depend upon their doing or not doing of His words (Matt. 7). Yea, He makes them the standard and test of men's state and destiny

at the judgment day—"The words that I have spoken shall judge him in the last day." And fitly crowning all He says in sublime majesty, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24³⁵).

His disciples also ever magnify His words and teaching, "To whom can we go, but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." "Whoso keepeth His word, in him is the love of God perfected." They speak of Him as "a prophet mighty in deed and word," of His word as more sure and steadfast than "the word spoken by angels"; as "Him that speaketh from heaven," in contrast with all others speaking upon earth. And they climax all by naming Him "The Word of God"—the best and perfect expression of the mind and heart and will of God. Hence the Eternal Father on the mount of transfiguration placed Him as a teacher in contrast, though not in conflict but in harmony with and in supremacy over, Moses the representative of the law, and Elijah the representative of the prophets; and actually opens heaven to say, "This is My beloved Son; *hear ye Him.*" It thus appears that compared with and in relation to the prophets of the O.T. and the apostles of the N.T., and all other teachers whatsoever, He is not only the Supreme Teacher, so far as He expressed His mind, but He occupies a unique place, and stands alone on a higher plane, in a position that is all His own—a lonely splendour.

THE REASONS OF CHRIST'S SUPREMACY.

For obvious reasons this is so. For; *First*, He is the only Perfect One. As revelation is always necessarily coloured and conditioned by its organ or medium, and as He is the only perfect organ, His was the only perfect revelation of God. And that not merely, or perhaps mainly, in His actual teaching, but in His character, spirit, and life, and in His death, resurrection, and glory; for they were all media of the revelation of God; and it was through and in them that the full and perfect revelation was made. They *all* teach, and He teaches through them all.

Second, because He had a special and unique anointing of the Holy Ghost at every stage and in every moment of His life; for from His birth the Holy Ghost rested on Him in a unique

way, and from His baptism abode on Him without measure, specially fitting Him for His peculiar public work. And as all Revelation is by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—"What the Spirit saith unto the churches,"—"What the Holy Ghost saith,"—therefore, His perfect anointing secured the most perfect teaching.

Third, and supremely, because He was the Son of God, yea very God of very God, and the God of truth; and, therefore, knew the truth as no other did, or could—fully, perfectly, directly; and, therefore, calls Himself "The Truth," as He is also called "The Word (Ὁ Λόγος) of God." He, therefore, could and did teach the truth, and reveal the Father in His incarnation, as the Son of Man, as no other could or did; for "The Word was made flesh" for this purpose, and "The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Therefore, no theory of Kenosis that would frustrate or mar this supreme purpose of the incarnation, and defeat His mission, can be admitted for a moment. His perfect manhood, His measureless unction by the Holy Ghost specifically for this end, and His perfect Godhood, and the very purpose of the incarnation—to perfectly reveal the Father in word and deed, in character and Personality—all secure His supremacy and infallibility as a teacher on everything on which He has expressed His mind, and preclude every theory of His Person or His teaching that denies, ignores, or questions this.

NOTE.—"No one who holds that God speaks to us through the Scriptures will question that the voice of God is peculiarly audible, intelligible, and compelling in Christ. When He speaks to us, God speaks to us."—Dr. Denney's *Studies in Theology*, p. 206.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THIS STANDPOINT WE CAN BEST REVIEW RECENT SPECULATION ON THE TEACHING OF JESUS AND HIS PLACE IN THEOLOGY.

FROM this clear and settled standpoint we can best examine some recent and not over-modest speculation on the teaching of Jesus and His place in theology, which will the better exhibit the truth on the subject by contrast, and will enable us to see more definitely Christ's place and function in the development of Revelation.

I. DR. JOHN WATSON'S VIEW AND COGNATE VIEWS.

Perhaps the best known author in this country on the subject is the charming fiction writer, Ian Maclaren, in his storm-raising book, *The Mind of the Master*. A well-written book, with many good, some fresh, and not a few striking things; occasionally brilliant flashes, and glimpses of far off horizons with enchanting vistas; intensely practical, eminently ethical, its zenith reached on "Character"; always interesting, anon eloquent, at times moving on high altitudes of thought and feeling; and all pervaded by a fine spirit, a lofty tone, and a passion for Jesus. It is, however, often incorrect, generally one-sided, and pervasively exaggerated, lacking balance; fragmentary, too, and superficial, inconsistent and often contradictory, escaping grave error only by glaring self-contradiction; a tendency to smartness rather than truthness; straining at effect more than reality; given to clever yet feeble caricature rather than solid argument; and vitiated throughout with false, because over-strained antitheses,—the style for fiction rather than theology, science, or serious literature.

CHRIST IS PUT IN ANTITHESIS AND ANTAGONISM IN
TEACHING TO THE PROPHETS AND APOSTLES.

In his searching criticism Dr. Denney has well said that of the many false antitheses in the book, the worst is the antithesis created between Christ and His apostles. But the antithesis is by no means limited to that. It extends to all the writers and writings of Scripture,—the supposed teaching of Jesus in the Gospels, or rather in the narrow ground of the Sermon on the Mount, being often put not only in contrast with, but more or less in antagonism to the teaching of all the writers of Scripture. For he not only puts Christ in antithesis to the apostles, but also the Gospels in disparaging contrast to the Epistles; and he so speaks of the teaching of Jesus in contrast with all the other teaching of Scripture as to do anything but raise the Bible or its writers in the estimation of its readers. His references to the O.T. in particular, and specially his most recent utterances¹ about the whole sacrificial system of God's Word and of God's ordination, are so depreciatory and even condemnatory that it is difficult to see how he can regard it, or that great Divine interpretation of it in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as the Word of God at all; and present a marked antagonism to Christ's manner of regarding and treating them. And his patronising and criticising handling of the great Apostle of the Gentiles,² and of his Divinely-inspired writings, which form much the greater part of the N.T. Revelation, savour of anything but reverence or modesty—a somewhat startling and staggering effect of this novel supreme regard for the teaching of Jesus;—the last thing I conceive, unless the Gospels belie Him, that would be learned of Christ as to any writer or portion of the Word of God,—especially such a large and vital portion of the N.T. Revelation, and such a devoted and distinguished servant of Christ; and the farthest thing possible, I imagine, from *The Mind of the Master*.

CRITICISM OF THESE ANTITHETICAL AND DISPARAGING
THEORIES OF SCRIPTURE.

But Dr. Watson is only one of many recent writers and teachers who put Christ in such antithesis to His prophets, who

¹ *The Christian World*.

² *The Mind of the Master*, pp. 37, 38.

spake and wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," and to His apostles, to whom He promised His Spirit to lead them into all truth, and to bring to their remembrance, and enable them to express, "whatsoever He had said unto them." So that in doing this it would, as He said, not be they that spoke, but the Spirit of their Father that spoke in them; and, therefore, the words they spoke or wrote under this power would not be their words only, but the Spirit's words and Christ's words and the Father's words—the words of the Godhead—"not the word of man, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God." Therefore we shall deal with all these disparagers of the Divine writings and Divinely-inspired writers together.

I. THE ASSUMED ANTITHESIS AND ANTAGONISM IS A BASELESS IMAGINATION.

In regard to all those antithetical theories it must be said—*First*. That their assumed antagonism between Christ and His apostles and prophets is a sheer mistake—a baseless imagination, without a shadow of a foundation in Scripture; but contrary to its whole tone, trend, and explicit teaching, and in full contradiction of the standard and most classical passages on the subject, which declare that "all Scripture (without distinction of parts or writers) is given by inspiration of God"—God breathed (θεόπνευστος), because "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Hence what they thus said or wrote is frequently prefaced or closed by, "Thus saith the Lord," "What the Spirit saith";—what God said through them—"as the Spirit gave them utterance,"—or the like; and, therefore, it is all equally in truth—"The Word of God"—which cannot contradict itself, or be really antagonistic in its teaching; as in fact Christ and His inspired messengers never even appear to do in their messages, except to mistaken imaginations, but always and everywhere manifest their unity and harmony.

2. IT DIRECTLY CONTRADICTS THE EXPLICIT TEACHING OF CHRIST.

Second. It is in direct contradiction to the explicit teaching of Christ, which they specially profess to honour. They must,

therefore, either abandon their special homage to Christ's teaching, or cease to disparage the teaching of His inspired servants. For He is the last who would receive honour to Himself at the cost of dishonour to or disparagement of His most honoured and devoted servants ; and He would be the first to condemn magnifying His teaching to the discredit or prejudice of the teaching of the prophets, whose writings He endorsed and came to fulfil ; or to the prejudice of the teaching of His apostles, whom He sent and inspired to be the organs of His Revelation and the founders of His church. On the contrary, He, as if to meet by anticipation this pernicious error, takes pains to magnify their office and their teaching ; and expressly, with special reference to their teaching, says, "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me ; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me" (Matt. 10¹⁰, John 13²⁰). "He that heareth you, heareth Me ; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me ; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me" (Luke 10¹⁶).

Further, He repeatedly promised to send and fill them with the Holy Spirit, to lead them into all truth, and to bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them (John 14²⁶) ; and to enable them so to teach the same, that what they taught might be the Spirit's teaching, for "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you" (Matt. 10²⁰). He thus promised them the same Spirit and the same power in their teaching as He Himself possessed and preached by (Luke 4¹⁸) ; thereby making their teaching and His of the same origin, character, and authority. After His resurrection, giving them their commission to proclaim His gospel and to extend His kingdom, He said, "As the Father sent Me, so send I you" (John 20²¹).

This promise He fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2⁴), so that their teaching was as truly the Spirit's teaching as Christ's was ; and must, therefore, not be antagonistic, but harmonious. Hence He gives the most solemn sanction to their teaching,—not only inspired it by His Spirit, but endorsed it with His authority, sealed it with His blessing, recognised it as His own and His Father's Word, and made men's eternity depend upon their reception or rejection of it. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words,

. . . Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city" (Matt. 10¹⁴, Mark 6¹¹, John 12⁴⁸ 13²⁰, Luke 10¹⁶, Matt. 10²⁰). And even of that most questioned and assailed portion of His servants' teaching—the O.T.—He identifies Himself with it, determines His own life by it,—as seen in that whole class of passages in which He says that He does and suffers many things "that the Scripture might be fulfilled"; and declares most absolutely that He came not to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil (Matt. 5^{17, 18}).

What room does Christ leave in these and many similar words for any antagonism between His own and the teaching of His apostles and prophets? Do they not preclude every idea of antagonism, antithesis, difference or disparaging contrast? How could He have more inevitably excluded any such imagination or more decisively declared the unity and harmony between their teaching and His? In short, the very idea of such things is utterly alien and opposed to the words and mind of the Master, and is absolutely precluded by His whole tone, attitude, teaching, and action. And it is because those teachers who claim to be experts in and to give special honour to the teaching of Christ, have overlooked, or ignored, or disowned His teaching on this particular subject, as they do in other cases of their erroneous teaching, that this unfounded and perverting theory has been entertained.

3. THE WHOLE CONCEPTION IS RATIONALISTIC, AND IGNORES THE DIVINE AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE—THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Third. Their whole conception is of a rationalistic nature, and is based upon a radical error as to the origin, character, and authority of the Bible. It springs from and illustrates the perversive influence of the rationalistic principle, which regards the writers of Scripture as so many different authors of an ordinary literature, instead of so many different and diversified organs and agents of a Divine revelation, of which God the Holy Ghost is the real prime Author, Agent, and Cause, by His Divine inspiration : and the various human agents are the divinely-chosen

and inspired organs, who each fulfil their function and supply their part through the Spirit's operation in them, according to their gifts and fitness, in the completion of the one unique Divine Book—the God-breathed Word of the Lord, that liveth and abideth for ever; and which becomes the word of our salvation when received as the Word of God. Their root conception and method of treatment of the Bible and its writers practically ignore its Divine authorship, which is the only rational account of its origin. They therefore handle its writers and writings like the diverse and often antagonistic authors and books of any ordinary literature; and in so doing “greatly err,” and fall into many grave errors; and lose the only key to its true understanding or appreciation.

They utterly fail to account for its real unity of doctrine, purpose, and spirit, which has impressed itself upon every earnest reader as upon every reverent student, notwithstanding all its diversity of thought, style, literary form, and immediate objects, and its variety of writers,—of diverse gifts, acquirements, and experience,—writing in different lands, circumstances, and ages, over fifteen hundred years: and which demands a Divine mind and a supernatural inspiration to account for this pervasive unity, this unique fact in the literature of the world. They, in fact, ignore the Holy Ghost as the real prime Author of Holy Writ, and often write as those who had never heard of the Holy Ghost; and are thus “in wandering mazes lost”; and not only lose themselves, but also lead others astray among the sparks of their own kindling. They thus not only overlook the real Divine origin of Scripture, but also fail to realise its Divine character as the veritable Word of God—the teaching of the Holy Ghost; which, though taught through men, was nevertheless the teaching of the Spirit, and taught “not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; ‘fitting spiritual words to spiritual things’”¹ (1 Cor. 2¹³),—the form of it as well as the substance, the expression of it as truly as what was expressed, being thus equally the work of the Spirit of God. So that the Holy Scriptures, both thoughts and words, spirit and embodiment, are in truth and equally the Word of God written. And though, as in other parts of God's works, there may be and there is variety in value, they are equally

¹ Alford's N. T., and Fausset.

Divine in origin and character. Hence the error, irreverence, and presumption of men daring to disparage any writing or writer of God's Word ; and still more, of putting one agent or organ of the one Divine Teacher, who teaches through them all, and is Himself the real Teacher in all, in antagonism with or antithesis to another.

But, further, in so doing, they not only overlook the Divine origin and ignore the Divine character of all Scripture, they also disown, or fail to recognise, the Divine authority of it, and the Divine Person who is the centre and seat of that authority, who is none else than "the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures," as the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Articles of the Presbyterian Church of England well express it. All through Scripture the Holy Spirit is represented as its Supreme Author and the all-pervading Teacher, and all other teachers or writers are represented as His agents or organs,—Jesus Christ Himself being no exception, but the best and supreme example of this, as He was also its most emphatic Teacher.

This has been already shown in a variety of ways and passages, and it can be seen pervading O.T. and N.T. by any careful reader. Let it, therefore, further suffice to refer to a few passages, and to advert specially to the words of our Lord. For the O.T. take the following: 2 Pet. 1^{20, 21} "Prophecy of old time came not by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"; where both the revelation and the expression of it are attributed to the Holy Spirit. 1 Pet. 1^{10, 11} "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Here the Spirit is both the communicator of the truth to the mind of the prophet and the giver of the prophecy *as expressed* for the salvation of men ; and where the prophets themselves did not fully understand their own prophecies, but required to search diligently for their precise signification ; and therefore the Spirit had to give literally the form of the prophecy, as also to become its interpreter even to the prophets. Heb. 1¹ "God . . . in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets"; and "all Scripture is God-breathed"

(θεόπνευστος), by the breathing or inspiration of God the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. 3¹⁶) ;—so that He is the Speaker, and all Scripture is His utterance ; and He is the Teacher of all its teaching, and the source and seal of its Divine authority. For the N.T. let the following suffice : “ It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you ” (Matt. 10²⁰). The promise of Christ was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost when the apostles “ spake as the Spirit gave them utterance ” (Acts 2³⁴) : “ Which things we speak, not in words of man’s wisdom, but in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth ” (1 Cor. 2¹⁴) ; so that “ it is in truth the Word of God ” (1 Thess. 2¹³)—of God the Holy Spirit. That holds *à fortiori* of what they wrote.

Christ Himself attributed all His Teaching and Work to the same Holy Spirit as inspired the Teaching of His Apostles.

And in regard to Christ, He Himself said at the beginning of His public ministry as covering it all : “ The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor,” etc. (Luke 4¹⁸) ; all His work as prophet, priest, and king being here in fulfilment of ancient prophecy (Isa. 61¹) at the outset expressly ascribed to the unction of the Holy Spirit. “ For He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God : for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him ” (John 3³⁴). Christ’s speaking the words of God is here attributed to His having the Spirit without measure given unto Him. “ If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then,” etc. (Matt. 12²⁸). This, too, was by the Spirit’s power. Again in fulfilment of prophecy, Christ’s teaching, “ showing judgment to the Gentiles,” is explained by “ I will put my Spirit upon Him ” (Matt. 12¹⁸). Perhaps most remarkable of all are His Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor after His ascension (Rev. 2. 3), which are represented as literally spoken from heaven by Himself to His servant John, “ who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus.” Yet though the very words appear as if actually spoken by the risen Lord, they are, nevertheless, said to be the words of the Spirit : “ He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” being the solemn refrain that closes each epistle. And whether we regard these words as spoken by Christ Himself, or as spoken to and through

John by the Spirit, they are still represented as the words of Jesus, and "what the Spirit saith"; the Spirit speaking through Christ personally in the one case, and speaking Christ's words through John in the other; but in either case the Spirit's words. So that in literal fact everything spoken through prophet or apostle, or Christ Himself is the Spirit's teaching and words,—God the Holy Ghost speaking through Christ and all His inspired servants "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

This, which is the only true view of Scripture, is fatal to all representations of antagonism, or antithesis, or disparaging contrast between Christ and His inspired servants, and patently precludes all such superficial and pernicious imaginations. For they are tantamount to a charge of antagonism and error in the teaching of the Spirit of truth, and are a virtual denial of the Divine authority of God the Holy Ghost, and, therefore, of Christ who sent Him, and of the Father whose words He spoke.

4. OUR WHOLE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST AND HIS TEACHING
IS DERIVED FROM THE SCRIPTURES WRITTEN BY THESE
• DISPARAGED AND DISCREDITED DISCIPLES.

Fourth. The advocates of this theory, which, as seen, ignores the claim of Scripture, contradicts the teaching of Christ, and disowns the Divine authorship of God's Word, also strangely overlook the simple, and to their view fatal fact, that our whole knowledge of Christ and His teaching is derived from the Scriptures, written by these discredited or disparaged apostles and evangelists. We know absolutely nothing about His teaching except from the Bible, and therefore we are entirely dependent on its writers for everything we know about it and Him. Consequently, if, and so far as, they were mistaken or defective in their conceptions or representations, so far necessarily and precisely we are as to His teaching and Himself. Since we get all we know of what He taught, or did, or was, only through them, we cannot get one step or know one iota on reliable ground beyond their conceptions and statements about His teaching. If they misunderstood or misrepresent His teaching in any way or measure, then to that extent exactly and self-evidently our conceptions of it and Him are wrong or defective, and never were or can be made right or perfect.

Right or wrong, we are and ever have been strictly limited within their thoughts and statements of it for anything reliable about it; and for better or for worse, we are therefore absolutely shut up to what they give and teach us of it. We must accept their representation of Christ's teaching or nothing. We cannot help ourselves; for the means or materials of testing the truth or correctness of their statements of it are not, and never were, in our possession. Every item we ever knew, or could know about it, came through them.

And yet in face of this great prime fact, ignoring it or not perceiving its significance, these theorists have gone on writing and speculating about the teaching of Jesus, and talking largely about the "rediscovery of Christ," as if they had just discovered a lost edition of the actual writings of Jesus Christ published at Jerusalem, which so contrasted with the representations of Him and His teaching given by the Bible writers that they felt quite warranted in riding rough-shod over the writings of the apostles and prophets,—some pouring sweeping condemnation on them, others making not less offensive patronising references to or criticism of them, and generally putting Christ's teaching in such antagonism and antithesis to theirs as at once to disparage and discredit theirs and them. Yet all the time they had not one line or letter of Christ's own writing, and were entirely dependent for every syllable known of His teaching upon the Bible writings and representations of these disparaged disciples. And not one iota of all their writings on the teaching of Jesus was of any value or interest to mankind except so far as it was derived from, and agreed with, the apostles' teachings on the mind of their Master.

Hence the amazing inconsistency and the manifest absurdity of making much of, or saying anything about, the teaching of Jesus when discrediting or disparaging, or in any way seeking to lessen the reliability or authority of the teaching and representations of the Bible writers, through whom alone we get all our knowledge of it or Him. It is simply suicidal. It is destructive of the sources, bases, and materials of all. Undermining men's own foundations, making holes in the bottom of their own ship, or cutting the ladder on which they stand would be innocent operations compared with this.

5. CHRIST SHUTS US UP TO THE TEACHING OF HIS APOSTLES
FOR ALL OUR KNOWLEDGE OF HIM AND HIS TEACHING.
THE *LOCUS CLASSICUS* (JOHN 16^{12, 13} 14²⁶).

Fifth. A further oversight is their failure to observe that Christ Himself most absolutely shuts us up to the teaching of His apostles, filled with His inspiring Spirit, for our whole knowledge of Him and of His teaching. Hence the significant fact that He appears never to have written anything Himself to form part of God's Word. But He uttered, and caused, with cognate utterances, to be recorded, as the basis of their authority as teachers, and the secret of their power as preachers, these memorable and suggestive words, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16^{12, 13}). "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14²⁶). Here there are many deep and far-reaching truths and revelations of the mind of the Master; but we limit ourselves at present to the following:—

First. That Christ was unable because of the unspiritual state of their minds to teach His apostles during His earthly life many things that He meant to reveal and teach them, and which were necessary to complete and crown God's revelation. *Second.* That He was to send the Holy Spirit, and that when He came He would lead them into all truth,—to enable them to understand better what they already knew, and to give new revelations of what they did not know, which would complete and perfect the full revelation of God. *Third.* That when the Spirit came He was to aid their memories, as well as enlighten their understandings, so as to bring to their remembrance, and to bring home to their minds and hearts, whatsoever He had said unto them; so that they would be able to teach them to others in His name, and with His authority, as His Word.

Among other things, this clearly states and proves that the only way, according to the teaching of Christ, in which men could truly understand His teaching, and fully know His mind, was through the teaching of His disciples as enlightened by His Spirit. This is not an inference from Christ's words, it is the

simple and unquestionable meaning of them. This is the clearest teaching of Christ, the most explicit declaration of the mind of the Master on the special question under consideration. To all who own Christ's authority as a teacher His own words put the question beyond question. It is no longer a matter for discussion. It is settled, and settled clearly and finally by the very words of the Master Himself. And it makes all the theorising of those who put Christ's teaching in antagonism or antithesis to the teaching of His apostles and prophets, while yet avowing special regard for His teaching, appear sufficiently strange, and far astray.

For this is His special teaching on the special question, and it is that He shuts men up to the teaching of His servants in the Scriptures for all our knowledge of Himself, His teaching and His religion,—unless, indeed, they are prepared to add to the presumption of claiming knowledge of the mind of the Master better than His apostles the further audacity of assuming to know it better than Himself! And what makes this teaching of our Lord all the more weighty and impressive is that it is given, not as mere teaching, but as a gracious, far-reaching, and oft-repeated promise to them, in prospect of their great and unparalleled work and responsibility. This promise was given them on the eve of His death, out of the fulness of His heart, of what lay deepest in His mind, as what would best assure them of comfort and equipment for the unique work he had chosen them to do, as the recipients and organs of His Revelation, and the channels and agents of God's salvation to all mankind. A promise that taught them, as it should teach us, entire dependence on the Holy Spirit—the real Author and Supreme Authority of all Scripture—for power to receive, understand, and teach the mind of Christ. A promise that assured them that the Spirit of truth would bring all Christ's teaching to their remembrance, and enable them to understand it as they had never done before; and would give them many new revelations of His mind and His Father's grace, which He had not before been able to teach them Himself, because of their inability to receive it; and would, indeed, lead them into all truth—into the full knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and enable them so to teach the same that what they taught would truly and fully express the mind of Christ “in words which the Spirit teacheth.”

This promise He fulfilled at Pentecost, when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance." This at length received permanent embodiment in the N.T.; so that it is, therefore, along with the O.T., the one Divine God-breathed book, and is thus "in truth the Word of God," because written through the Spirit of God.

This precludes all Disparagement of the Apostles and their Spirit-given Writings.

How strange and untenable in the light of this and much similar, from the very words of Christ and Scripture, is the recent magnifying of Christ's teaching to the disparagement and discrediting of the teaching of His apostles! For He not only shuts men up by His own teaching and action to the teaching of the apostles for all knowledge of His teaching, but He also tells His disciples that their own understanding of what He had taught them, and even their remembrance of what He had said unto them (so far as it was to be remembered), as well as what was yet to be given them to complete their knowledge of His mind and of God's Revelation, were all dependent on the promised illumination they were to receive when the Holy Spirit came upon them to lead them into all truth. So that everything they were to know or to convey of Christ's mind was to be taught them and conveyed through them by the Spirit as the Word of God; and all that they spoke or wrote in His name was to be the Spirit's teaching in the Spirit's words.

The Apostles were not mere "Reporters" of Christ's Teaching, but Divinely-inspired Organs of God's Revelation.

What a contrast and contradiction all this, and much like teaching of Christ, to the crude root-ideas of those would-be discoverers and magnifiers of Christ and His teaching, who, by not knowing or ignoring the Scriptures and His teaching, have so greatly erred as to imagine and proclaim that there was or could be any antagonism, or antithesis, or discrepancy between the teaching of Christ and of His apostles. They have assumed that the N.T. writers were simply "reporters" of the words of Christ, and that, while they might be taken as on the whole fairly

good reporters of His words, their own teaching had no such character or authority ; and might, therefore, be as freely criticised as any other literature, and put in antithesis and opposition to His. But they have failed to discover what Christ most clearly taught, that they were not reporters in the ordinary sense at all, but the divinely-chosen and inspired organs of God's Revelation ; and that their teaching was of the same origin, character, and authority as Christ's, because the same Holy Spirit inspired both, and made them both equally the Spirit's teaching in the Spirit's words—the Word of God ; and that every word they wrote of His was brought to their remembrance, and made luminous to their minds by the Spirit ; and was expressed in the Scriptures in words of the Spirit's teaching. For as "prophecy came of old not by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1²¹), so the Revelation of the N.T. was not given or written at the will of man, nor in the words of man's wisdom, but chosen teachers of God wrote as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost in the words that the Spirit taught,—the Spirit creating the purpose to write, imparting the power to write, giving the revelation to be written, and directing the writers in the selection, arrangement, and expression of what was written.

The Apostles' remembrance, understanding, and expression of Christ's Teaching were through the Spirit.

As to the teaching of Christ, in particular, the Spirit brought to their remembrance those words of Christ that were to be written (for, as John 21²⁵ tells us, many of them were not written, but only such as Divine wisdom thought best for the permanent ends of Revelation). The Spirit led them into the full understanding of these words, and enabled them to express them in the form and setting best fitted to express the mind of Christ in each case. For the same substance is differently expressed in different connections. So that Christ's teaching as assimilated is part of the respective writers' teaching also,—according to the standpoint, purpose, and characteristics of each as guided by the Spirit. Strictly speaking, what we get of Christ's teaching in the Gospels is that teaching as assimilated and utilised by the writers after receiving the promised illumination of the Spirit. It is not

Christ's teaching simply as given by Him during His earthly life; but that teaching brought home to their memories and hearts, illumined and transformed by the Spirit's light, according to the capacity, standpoint, and function of each in the expression of the Divine Revelation as embodied in the Gospels. This may explain many of the differences in the record of the same things, which have perplexed some and led others to charge errors where none existed, because they knew not the reason of such differences. But all this shows how far astray from the facts, and the teaching of Scripture and of Christ, is the modern idea of "reporters" or mere recorders; which has misled many to imagine antithesis and antagonism in teaching between Christ and His apostles. Properly viewed, it amounts to a charge:—first, of conflict between the disciples and the Master; second, of contradiction in the teaching of the Spirit of truth, who is the one supreme, pervasive teacher; third, of self-contradiction in the inspired writers. A threefold contradiction this which it demands amazing credulity to believe that God would permit in giving the revelation of His grace.

The Presumption of the Apostles' Critics.

They also assume and imagine that they can isolate and separate the teaching of Christ from the baser apostolic material in which it is embedded in the Gospels, setting it by itself, free from its prejudicial environment, and improve upon the work of the Holy Ghost! But it is a vain delusion. As soon expect flowers or aromatic plants to retain their beauty and give forth their fragrance away from their rooting and their atmosphere. For while the words of Jesus have a wonderful vitality and power in themselves and in any connection, they never are themselves, or exhibit their full beauty, or emit their sweetest fragrance, or exert their divinest virtue, except in their Divine setting, Spirit-given habitat, and native air. And they vainly dream that they can fragment and vivisection the Spirit's embodiment and environment of Christ's teaching as given in Scripture, by cutting it to pieces at will, and then by their superior skill so combine their excerpted parts as to make such a monograph of His teaching and life as will be a far truer and better presentation of it and Him! Sooner would they restore in more than pristine perfection a

peerless sculptor's masterpiece in statuary, after they had broken it into atoms ; or reanimate in more than its first exquisiteness the living body and person of your best and greatest friend, after cutting him to pieces, and having him dissolved into dust and ashes. They entirely ignore, or are unblissfully ignorant of the prime truth of the Divine unity and inviolable solidarity of the teaching of Scripture and of Christ ; and they seem never to have grasped the profound and far-reaching fact of the living organic oneness of both, which makes them one unique Spirit-vivified organic whole—the living Word of the living God.

What strikes one most, however, in such conceptions is not merely the error and crudeness, but the amazing presumption, to say nothing of the absurdity, of such suppositions. That they should imagine they could at the distance of almost two millenniums know "the Mind of the Master" better than the disciples whom He first taught personally, and then taught more fully by His Spirit, or better even than the Master Himself—yea, even than the Holy Spirit, who inspired the teaching of both them and Him, and embodied it through them in the Scriptures,—is a signal illustration of how vain men can become in their imaginations, when they walk in the light of their own eyes, in the sparks of their own kindling, amid the blaze of the noonday sun. A comparison of their improved editions of the teaching of Jesus with the Divine edition, as given through the Spirit by these disparaged disciples, will suffice, on simple inspection, to impress on all the folly of their pretensions ; while the fact that they owe to these very disciples every item of reliable material out of which to make their improved editions sufficiently exhibits their absurdity. And a comparison of these God-breathed writings with the writings on the same subjects of even the writers of the same time, the Apostolic Fathers, who were in fullest sympathy with the themes, and the companions as well as the disciples of the apostles, and breathing the first fresh air of Christianity's early dawn as it breathed and thrilled from the very soul and presence of the Divine Master, will impress every candid reader with the amazing contrast, as it has impressed students from the first, bringing home the conviction that the Bible writings are unique (*sui generis*), occupy another plane, and are, in fact, different in kind from any other writings ; and demand a Divine, supernatural cause as their only adequate explanation.

6. THE RADICAL ERROR OF LIMITING CHRIST'S TEACHING TO HIS EARTHLY LIFE. THE APOSTLES' TEACHING WAS CHRIST'S TEACHING THROUGH THEM BY HIS SPIRIT.

Sixth. These theorists make the mistake of limiting the teaching of Christ to His earthly life. They overlook the fact that Christ continued His teaching after His resurrection and ascension—that He then taught His apostles by His Spirit the “many things” He had to say unto them which they could not bear before, but which He promised to teach them when the Spirit of truth came; and that, in fact, the whole teaching of the apostles given in Scripture was the teaching of Christ by His Spirit. Hence in His great promise He says: “I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now”; but “when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth”—that is, Christ would then say to them the “many things” they could not bear before; and “bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you”; that is, enable them to remember and understand His previous teaching, as well as give them many further revelations He could not teach them, because they could not learn them earlier.

But through and in all—old and new—He was their teacher. Hence the writer of the Acts of the Apostles significantly says: “The former treatise have I (Luke) made of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up” (Acts 1¹)—the writer plainly implying that what He had taught up to that time was only the beginning of His teaching, and that this teaching was to be continued and completed through His Spirit. Hence, too, in the Apocalypse, in the Epistles to the Seven Churches, it is “what the Spirit saith unto the Churches,” although Christ Himself appears throughout as the actual speaker; because what the Spirit says Christ says, and *vice versa*. Hence, also, when closing the Book of Revelation, Christ Himself, though apparently conveying it through the Spirit to John, and through John to all, again appears as uttering the very words by which He at once, as seen below, solemnly closes the volume of Revelation, and seals in the name of Godhead the inviolable truth and Divine authority of Holy Writ.

Thus the whole Epistles of Paul, which form much the larger part of the N.T., are the teaching of Christ; and are

declared to be the revelation which he received, not of men but of Jesus Christ, direct from the Lord Himself by the Spirit. Yet not one word or thought of it was given by Christ to Paul during His earthly ministry, but from heaven, and through the Spirit. And his Epistles are said to be given "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 1¹³); and they are, therefore, declared to be and to be received as "not the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2¹³). Yea, he says, "though we have known Jesus Christ after the flesh, yet now know we Him no more" in that way.

As with the Epistles of Paul, so also with the Epistles and Apocalypse of John, the Epistles of Peter, James, Jude, Hebrews, —in fact, all the other N.T. writings,—they were all inspired, and given after Christ's ascent and the Spirit's descent, and were the fruit and product of the Spirit's inspiration, and were the teaching of Christ to and through His disciples, so that they could all say in truth with Paul in every one of them, "we have the mind of Christ"; and they all expressed that mind as the Spirit taught them in the Spirit's words.

Even in the Gospels what we have is also Christ's teaching by the Spirit,—some of the latest and highest teachings of Christ through the Spirit being there. They are, in fact, all Christ's teaching to and through His disciples by His Spirit. Even the words of our Lord in the Gospels are not His words merely as uttered during His earthly life, but these words as brought home to their remembrance and hearts by the Spirit, as illumined and transformed in their minds, and through His inspiration embodied as they are in the Gospels. So that although they may be spoken and thought of, and written about as different parts of God's Revelation, and profitably too, if wisely under the Spirit's guidance (which should ever be duly recognised and relied on, and not mere unspiritual scholarship,—for the natural man, however learned, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (2 Cor. 2¹⁴)),—yet we can never really or rightly separate them, far less put them in antagonism or antithesis.

For the teaching of the apostles properly understood is the teaching of Christ through them by His Spirit, and Christ's teaching is their teaching as assimilated, and utilised, and

in some parts apparently somewhat idealised or generalised (especially in John), according to the measure and function of each for the specific purposes of Revelation ; and both teachings, or the one teaching of both, is the Spirit's teaching, who taught through both them and Him ; so that they are one unique, Divinely-inspired, harmonious whole—a lonely Divine splendour in the religious literature of the world—the Word of God. Proceeding on the false assumption that the teaching of our Lord ended with His earthly life, these theorists have thus again greatly erred, not knowing the Scriptures in their Divine authorship, nor the mind of the Master as expressed in the Spirit-inspired words of His disciples, and ignoring the express teaching of Christ on this special question. As He is king for ever, and His kingdom an everlasting kingdom, and a Priest for ever on His throne, so, as in His kingship and Priesthood, in His Prophethood also, He continueth ever the eternal Prophet who by His Spirit gave to His apostles the full and final revelation of His mind, and still continues to teach us through them by His words and Spirit the will of God for our salvation.

7. THE ERROR OF SUPPOSING THAT CHRIST'S TEACHING DURING HIS LIFE WAS THE HIGHEST OR FINAL TEACHING OF REVELATION OR OF CHRIST.

Seventh. Only one further and final oversight and error of these critics of Scripture, and disparagers of its inspired writers, shall we now advert to ; and that is so palpably contrary to the express teaching of Christ Himself, and the simple facts of the case, that it only requires statement to be self-evident ; especially as it has been frequently referred to in other connections above. It is that the teaching of Christ, during His earthly life, given in the Gospels, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount,—which Dr. Watson and many others make supreme, and the norm and test of all Scripture,—is the highest and final teaching, and the supreme standard and authority by which all religious and ethical teaching, and all the teaching of prophets and apostles in all the rest of Scripture, are to be judged ; and that the teaching of the apostles, and prophets in particular, as tested by this has been found wanting, and even wrong in various parts and ways ; and is altogether on a lower plane, and of an inferior kind.

This Sermon on the Mount Dr. Watson and others propose to make the basis, substance, and form of the new ethical creed, as it is called; which has been formulated to supersede all the creeds of Christendom; and is in itself so simple, reasonable, and free of difficulty¹ that it may and would be agreed to by all mankind,—Jew and Gentile, Hindoo and Mahomedan, Christian and heathen,—and become the basis of a new faith and brotherhood of man, which would ring out the strife of creeds and religions, and ring in a millennium of faith and morals, and usher in the jubilee of the world,—some hailing this new ethical creed as a new revelation from heaven, and the dawn of a new era in religion and ethics! One is grieved, by this persistent disparaging of the inspired writers, and this vicious placing of them in antithesis and antagonism to Christ, to be forced even to appear to qualify what was stated above as to the uniqueness and pre-eminence of the personal teaching of our Lord. But the evils of this modern method of treating the Bible are so great and prevalent, and are all the more insidious because seeming to honour Christ, that the other side must be clearly stated,—not, indeed, to modify anything we have said as to His supremacy and unique position as a teacher, nor to say anything but what He Himself has said; on the contrary, it is regard for His teaching that supremely constrains the statement.

(I.) CHRIST'S CRITICISM OF THE CRITICS' CRITICISM GENERALLY.

As to the views taken as a whole, let the following suffice along with what has been said above.

I. IT IS DIRECTLY CONTRARY TO CHRIST'S TEACHING TO PUT HIS TEACHING IN ANTITHESIS OR ANTAGONISM TO HIS DISCIPLES' TEACHING.

First. It contradicts the express teaching of Christ on this question, while professing to give Him special honour. It is in full and direct contradiction to those all-important and often

¹ Yet there are few parts of Scripture with so many serious difficulties. Witness Tolstoi's doctrine of non-resistance based on it; and its apparent impracticability, declared by agnostics to be "Altruism,"—not fit for this world,—making Jesus seem a Visionary.

adduced decisive passages, which embody a leading part of His teaching on this specific subject (John 16^{12, 13} 14²⁶). Here and elsewhere, in language so plain that "a wayfaring man though a fool cannot err therein," our Lord emphasises the fact that He was precluded, by their inability to receive it, from teaching them many things; that He was thus limited then to the more elementary truths; and that His disciples, after the descent on them of the Spirit of truth, would receive, in order to teach, many new and higher revelations, which would complete their knowledge and teaching, and be the highest and final Revelation of the Mind of their Master and the Father's will.

Thus Christ settles the question finally on His Divine authority that not His own personal teaching during His earthly life, but His disciples' teaching after the coming of the Spirit, was the highest teaching and the final Revelation; or that Christ's teaching after His ascension, through His apostles, specially inspired by the Spirit, embodied in the N.T., is the highest, fullest, and final Revelation,—the disciples' teaching completing the Master's—the Master's teaching from heaven by His Spirit, through the apostles, completing and perfecting His personal teaching on earth. So that to disparage the apostles' teaching is to depreciate the highest, crowning, and final teaching of Christ; and the only way to know and honour His highest and latest teaching is to know and honour theirs. Here the refutation of this error might end; for the proof of its erroneousness is closed, and conclusive by the words and authority of the Master. But it is so prevalent and pernicious, and the root of so large and misleading a literature, that it is well to look at it briefly in other bearings.

2. IT OVERLOOKS THAT CHRIST'S POSITION PREVENTED HIM TEACHING MUCH THAT HE TAUGHT TO AND THROUGH HIS APOSTLES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.

Second. It overlooks the fact that Christ was prevented by His own position, as well as by the mental state of His disciples, from teaching them many things during His earthly ministry that He afterwards taught them by His Spirit. How, for example, could He have so spoken about His death and resurrection, with the infinitudes of grace and truth rooted and centred there, until

they had actually taken place, as He could and did afterwards? Yet these are the two chief roots from which the Christian Revelation springs—the two light centres from which the Light of the World radiates His healing beams. From the very nature of the case He could not have spoken of these, with all their Divine depths and limitless issues, publicly, as His disciples did afterwards, without anticipating His death unwarrantably, and arresting His life-work before it was finished; and thereby violating the condition and frustrating the end of His incarnation, defeating His Divine mission, and depriving us of His invaluable experience as the Son of Man, which has been such a precious fountain of sympathy and inspiration to mankind.

Neither could He have taught His disciples the Divine significance and infinite riches of grace treasured there till the profound Divine events themselves burst upon their opening minds with a flood of light unspeakable and full of glory, and the cross and the grave became radiant with a blaze of glory that through them illumined the race and fills the world. Hence He spoke little of these, and that little in a way that was never understood or really believed by them,—the natural love of their hearts combining with the spiritual dulness of their minds in shutting out the unwelcome thought of the coming event that casts its dread shadow before.

To these two radical facts and fruitful roots of the Christian faith a third may be added—the incarnation and the profound mystery of it, and the facts connected with it—the annunciation, the salutation of Elisabeth, the supernatural conception, the birth, the flight into Egypt, the presentation in the temple. There is no proof that His disciples knew these facts till after the resurrection; and they seem never to have been spoken of by Christ to His disciples, as from the nature of the case they would not and could not well be.

And yet the incarnation, along with the death and the resurrection, is the tap-root of the Christian faith; and these three, which Christ was, by the very nature and the necessities of the case, precluded from teaching or speaking of personally during His earthly life, are the three root facts and prime factors, light centres, and chief revelations of the Christian faith. So also the unpreparedness of the people, the hateful opposition of the Pharisees, the murderous jealousy and conspiracies

of those in power, the sleepless malice and vigilance of the prince of darkness, the antagonism of the prevalent anticipations of the Messiah to what the true Messiah was to be, the necessity of His being a moral test and discipline for Israel and mankind, on the recognised principles of God's moral government, and the claims and limitations of His position and circumstances as the real Son of Man and the reputed Son of Joseph, while yet the true Son of God, in countless ways limited His action and restricted His teaching. Therefore, although so far as He was free to express His mind, and did express it, His teaching was, as shown above, supreme and unique, yet in "many things" He tells us He was not free, and did not express it personally during His earthly ministry, but gave it afterwards by His Spirit, through His inspired disciples,—whose teaching is, therefore, the completion and crown of His—the full and final Revelation of God. But all this, and much more cognate, is unknown or ignored in this modern theory.

3. IT IGNORES THAT CHRIST'S TEACHING AS GIVEN IN THE GOSPELS IS ONLY THE DISCIPLES' CONCEPTIONS OF IT AS GIVEN THEM BY THE SAME SPIRIT WHO GAVE THEM THEIR OWN, AND IS THEIR TEACHING ALSO.

Third. It also ignores the fact that the teaching of Christ as given in the Gospels is not merely Christ's teaching as uttered during His earthly life, but that teaching selected by each evangelist as each apprehended, assimilated, and expressed it transformed and so far idealised by the illumination and inspiration of the Spirit, as each supplied His appointed part in the one Divine God-breathed book. Hence it is given in the respective Gospels in different forms and connections, which give different yet complementary aspects and elements of the one Divine Revelation. So that the teaching of Christ as given by each is as truly their individual teaching also as it is His; and, therefore, they share with Him in whatever excellence and supremacy belongs to it. How unfounded and misleading, then, is disparagement of their teaching alongside of His, for His as known to us is theirs, as theirs as given in the Gospels is His.

Nay, more, and this is the chief and crucial thing, it is their conceptions of His teaching that we have in the Gospels, and

beyond these we cannot rise or know one iota. It is not merely that all our knowledge of what He taught comes through them, but that their conceptions of His teaching as given them by the Spirit, and these alone, are what is given us of His teaching in the Gospels. Therefore, their conceptions of His teaching, as given in the Gospels, must limit, rule, and compose ours, as they are the only source and sole materials of our knowledge or conception of it, so far as the Gospels are concerned. Yet it is from their conceptions of the teaching of their Master as embodied in the Gospels that the recent critics of their teaching profess to derive all they know of His teaching by which they disparage their teaching. A sufficiently odd and awkward result this surely for these critics and their teaching for it is discrediting their own sources and authorities, and destroying the bases and materials of their own structure. How suicidal, then, to impugn the apostles' teaching while magnifying His, for we have only their conceptions of His; and if they have misconceived and misrepresented Him and His religion in their other teaching, what confidence can we place in their conceptions and representations of what they give us of His teaching? And what value, then, can any scheme of the teaching of Jesus have?—to say nothing of the absurdity that we can know the mind of the Master better than His disciples, when our knowledge of it is derived solely from their ideas and embodiments of it.

4. IT IS CONTRARY TO THE UNQUESTIONABLE FACTS.

Fourth. It is contrary to the palpable facts of the case. For Christ not only promised to send His Spirit to lead them into all truth, and to teach other and higher truths than He had been able to teach them; but He also as a matter of certain fact fulfilled that promise at Pentecost; and that, along with the, to them, new facts of His death and resurrection, not only cast a wondrous light on what He had said to them before, but also gave them fresh and vital facts and truths, and new and higher revelations, which completed, perfected, and crowned their knowledge of the mind of Christ and the Revelation of God. Besides, Christ appeared to them during the forty days after His resurrection, and not only reminded them of leading things He had said to them, which His death and resurrection

had fulfilled, and illumined the O.T. with such a glory as simply transformed it, and made it a new revelation to their minds, but He also gave distinctively new and crowning revelations to complete and perfect His own previous teaching. Each fresh appearance was a new revelation, and all of them together form a great gospel, or precious parts of the one complete and perfect Gospel—as may be seen in such works as Dr. Westcott's *The Gospel of the Resurrection* and *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*. And, further, He appeared after His ascension to His apostles, and gave personally, and by His Spirit, such visions and revelations of Himself, of His mind, and of His Father's grace, as are contained in the Apocalypse, the Hebrews, the Epistles of Peter, John, and Paul, and the Gospel of John—which form nine-tenths of the N.T. Revelation, and contain such large and vital portions of the Gospel as we know it and live by it ; and by which He gave the full and final revelation of God's will for man's salvation. So that this unfounded theory practically ignores the whole work and revelations of the Holy Ghost, the whole teaching and prophetic work of Christ after the resurrection, and implies either that Christ's promise of the Spirit was not fulfilled,—which the surest facts preclude, or that its purpose was frustrated,—which Christian faith repudiates.

CHAPTER IV.

(II.) *THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. ITS PLACE IN REVELATION AND IN CHRIST'S TEACHING.*

LET what follows suffice as to the recent extraordinary magnifying of the Sermon on the Mount, as the one or only perfect revelation, the test and norm of all other revelations,—the supreme and only authoritative standard of faith and life,—the sum and substance of the teaching of Christ,—the Mount Hermon that looks down with Divine supremacy upon all the lower heights of Revelation—Dr. Watson saying, “The Book of Judgment is the Sermon on the Mount.”

I. IT HAS NOT A SUPREME BUT A SUBORDINATE, THOUGH A UNIQUE PLACE IN DIVINE REVELATION.

First. Although the Sermon on the Mount has a place of its own in Scripture, and in the teaching of Christ near the beginning of His ministry, laying down some of the first principles of His Kingdom; and while it gives an invaluable declaration of the Divine origin, truth, and authority of the O.T., with His Divine interpretation and development of it; and reaches up to some of the highest pinnacles of ethical elevation,—yet it occupies by no means a supreme place either religiously or ethically, in God's Word, and has only a minor place in the teaching of Christ, and is the veriest fragment, and not at all the most important but a very subordinate fragment, of His teaching. Why, then, should such a small and preparatory fragment be lifted up into such pre-eminence and supremacy? There is not a syllable in His teaching to show that He meant it to occupy any such place. There is not a little to the contrary.

He never afterwards appears to have referred to it, or to reteach it, as He does in other cases. In Luke there is only a brief fragment of it, and in somewhat different form. To Mark and John it does not appear to be of sufficient importance to be given at all; whereas many other things and sayings are given in three, and even in the four Gospels. We find few, if any, references to it in the other N.T. writing, although we do to other sayings of Christ, and to other great facts in His life, by all of which He teaches. Compare, for example, the full and detailed accounts of His sufferings, death, and resurrection given in the four Gospels at such length, and His many pregnant utterances and references connected therewith, forming altogether such a large part of the Gospels, and the burden and substance, core and glory of all the rest of the N.T. as well as the Old. Then the Sermon on the Mount, given in any fulness only in one Gospel and never after referred to, dwindles into a small and subordinate place indeed. And if prominence in Scripture and place in the mind of Christ are to be taken as any indication of the importance of the subject,—as they surely are,—then, verily, the Sermon on the Mount must take a very lowly and obscure position when compared with the glory that excelleth.

2. IT IS CHRIST'S ELEMENTARY AND PREPARATORY TEACHING,
NOT SO HIGH AS HIS PARABOLIC OR PASSION TEACHING,
OR THE EPISTLES, THOUGH PRIMARY IN ITS OWN PLACE.

Second. It is really Christ's elementary teaching, preliminary to and preparatory for His after higher and fuller teaching—ever advancing during His earthly ministry; and leading on to His highest and final teaching by His Spirit through His apostles, after His resurrection and ascension. It has only to be looked at to see that this is its real character. It treats chiefly of elementary truth—the first principles of the Kingdom of God, and the practice of the ordinary moral and religious duties, and that, too, from the standpoint, on the basis, and largely in the very language of the O.T. No doubt He treats of them, as of everything else on which He ever opened His divinely-anointed lips, with a freshness, profundity, and power all His own; and discloses with a unique penetration and impressiveness the Divine depths and soul-searching spirituality of the ancient

Scriptures; and he lifts all, as He does every subject He touched, into the presence of God, and vivifies them with the atmosphere of eternity and the love of the heavenly Father. But the things themselves are on the lower planes of rudimentary truth and ethical practice; what in another connection, and as to other things on a lower plane, the writer of Hebrews calls "the first principles of the oracles of God," which he complained of having to reteach to those Christians who should have known better, and who seemed disposed to remain as babes, needing to be fed with milk, instead of men relishing strong meat.

Who that knows anything of spiritual truth, or the higher life in Christ, would think of comparing, *from the view-point of advancedness*, or the higher Christian revelation, Christ's ethical teaching in the Sermon on the Mount with His higher parabolic and spiritual teaching; or with His sublime teaching on "the last things"; or with much of His profound spiritual teaching in John's Gospel, which has earned it the name of "the Divine Gospel"; or least of all with His teaching about His death, resurrection, and coming glory, with all the infinitudes of grace and truth and destiny rooted and radiating there; or even with, say, Paul's profound Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Romans, or the unique 13th and 15th of 1 Corinthians; or with that great book, the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is yielding such treasures to Christian experience and to recent scholarship; or with John's Divine first Epistle, or his sublime Apocalypse, including our Lord's seven epistles, and His last words of Revelation, for its name is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ"?

The Sermon on the Mount moves on far lower planes, and deals with things much less high and mysterious. And since, as we have seen, Christ taught that His highest and final teaching could not be given till He was glorified, and He through the Spirit gave it to and through His apostles; and since the Sermon on the Mount holds only a small and elementary place in Christ's earthly teaching,—all this recent magnifying of the Sermon on the Mount, to the disparagement of the rest of Scripture, and to the depreciation of the mass of even Christ's chief teaching; and this making of that rudimentary sermon the supreme and final revelation, and proposing to make it the test and standard of all other revelations, and the basis of the new ethical creed, which

is to replace all other creeds and unify the faith of mankind, and usher in the millennium of Christian belief,—is truly astounding simplicity and amazing credulity; while to call it, as Dr. Watson does, “The Book of Judgment,” is surely the acme of extravagance.

Its preliminary and elementary character is perhaps more shown by what it does not teach, rather than by what it does. To say nothing of no Trinity, no Holy Ghost, no free grace, there is in it almost nothing directly about Christ Himself, who is the theme and substance of Revelation, and the heart and glory of the Gospel. There is no incarnation, though it is the root and origin of the Gospel; no redemption, though it is the basis, soul, and burden of the Gospel: no resurrection, though it is the goal, hope, and power of the Gospel. We find little of the life to come, though it is the crown and issue of the Gospel. Nor have we the great truths and facts that are presupposed, rooted, and perfected in these; which form the substance of the Gospel, and the main teaching of Scripture and of Christ, and are the things in which, as Christians, we live, and move, and have our being. So that it might, indeed, be said that there is more of the essence of the full-orbed Gospel in one sentence of Christ (John iii. 16) than in the whole Sermon: as there certainly is a fuller and tenderer Gospel and a clearer and weightier revelation of both the mind and heart of the Master in the sacred words of the Divine institution that commemorates His love to us, and our redemption by His blood.

IT IS PRIMARY IN TEACHING THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF
ETHICS, AND OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

It must not, however, be supposed from this that we depreciate the Sermon on the Mount, or refuse it the place that belongs to it, and that Christ has given it. On the contrary, in its own place, for its own purpose, and on its own subjects we prize it immensely, and hold it to be unique; and on no portion of God's Word have we more thought, and taught with more profit and delight. Nor is that place unimportant but primary in its own way. It is preliminary, but a necessary preliminary to the other teaching of Christ and His apostles. It is preparatory, but an indispensable preparation for the full and

effectual proclamation of the gospel. It is elementary, ethical, and religious teaching ; but essential elements, without which the teaching of the other and higher elements was impracticable—the Euclid though not the Differential Calculus of ethical and religious mathematics. It is the great and glorious portal leading into and forming a prime part of the Divine temple of the N.T. Revelation ; without which, and the entering into which, men cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

It was the formal beginning of our Lord's public teaching ; and it behoved Him to begin at the beginning. Necessity was laid upon Him to commence low, to start with the first principles of His Kingdom, and from that to go forward gradually into higher things as men could receive them, till that which was perfect was reached at length. This He, as a wise Master, would have done in any case. There was a special necessity for Him doing so in this case, because of the low and even wrong moral and religious conceptions that prevailed. As at the close of His public ministry He had, because of their inability then to receive these, to refrain from saying to His chosen disciples many things He had yet to teach them by His Spirit : so much more among His hearers generally at the beginning, He had to start with the rudiments, and to begin with the first principles of religion and ethics, else He could have never taught them at all ; especially as these had become so misconceived by current ideas, and so perverted by prevalent teaching.

As we have heard Dr. Alexander Duff, the prince of Indian missionaries, say in his lectures on Evangelistic Theology, that he had to begin his missionary work, not by preaching the gospel as usually given, but by teaching the first elements of morality and religion ; because of the low state and wrong conceptions on these prevalent among the Hindoos,—quoting the example of Christ in this Sermon as his authority ; so our Lord had to begin His great world-wide mission by clearing away, as He does in this Sermon, the many prevalent errors, rabbinical encrustations, and Jewish perversions of the truth ; and then going on to proclaim the first principles of the kingdom of God, more and more, unto the fulness of the perfect Revelation.

Thus the elementary character of the Sermon on the Mount was a mental and moral necessity, and an essential preliminary to the full preaching of the kingdom, and is a solemn inauguration

of that Kingdom. In this sense it may be called "the Manifesto of the King," but by no means the full gospel of the Kingdom. And it is because many recent teachers have overlooked this prime fact, and the place that Christ Himself has given it in His mission and teaching, and partly because of their own leaning being more ethical than evangelical, that they have spoken so extravagantly of the Sermon on the Mount, and misplaced the emphasis of the gospel by placing it on the Sermon on the Mount, instead of, like Christ and His apostles, ever placing it on the redemption of the cross and the gospel of the resurrection.

3. IT IS BASED UPON AND LARGELY TAKEN FROM THE O.T.
AND IN IT CHRIST SOLEMNLY DECLARES THE INVIOLEABLE
TRUTH AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE O.T.

Third. They fail to perceive that the Sermon on the Mount is largely taken from the O.T., both in form and substance ; and that in it our Lord with awful majesty declares its Divine origin, authority, and inviolability ; and solemnly seals it, both Law and Prophets—the O.T. in its integrity, with His Divine authority as the Word of God, which He came not to destroy, or disparage, or discredit, as the would-be magnifiers of His Sermon do, but, on the contrary, to fulfil, declaring most absolutely that heaven and earth would pass away, but that one jot or tittle should in no wise pass from the law—the most decried and criticised part of it—till all should be fulfilled. They vociferate, "The Teaching of Christ and the Sermon on the Mount is supreme." And yet when they get that teaching, even from that very Sermon in His own majestic words, declaring most absolutely the inviolability and Divine authority of the O.T. in its integrity, they refuse to submit to it, disown, deny, and repudiate it ; and go on assailing, depreciating, and condemning it and all Scripture at their own free will. And yet they profess specially to honour Him and His teaching ! Well might He say with righteous rebuke, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not [or believe not] the things that I say ?"

Most precious facts these for those who receive the O.T. as the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority ; and for this with other reasons hold the Sermon on the Mount in

its own place and for its own purposes to be of prime importance and unique value. But most awkward facts surely these for those who, while avowedly magnifying the teaching of Christ in this Sermon, disparage the O.T. as a whole which He held in such honour, discredit it in fundamental parts while He said He came to fulfil it, and denounce it in essential elements while He taught it was sacred and inviolable in every jot and tittle.

This is largely simply the English echo of German Rationalism. Yet surely the last thing such teachers should magnify is the Sermon on the Mount, and the teaching of Jesus there! But precious or awkward, facts they are which no one can gainsay. The beatitudes, so rich and beautiful, and so deservedly admired, are every one of them found in the O.T. in largely the same or similar words, though combined in His own unique way. The ethical teaching in it, which rises to such Divine altitudes, is all founded on the law of the Lord in the O.T., of which the psalmists and prophets speak and sing with such love and rapture. Nor does He in one single instance depreciate, far less condemn that law, as these teachers erroneously alleged. Yet He develops it, perfects it, spiritualises it, and glorifies it all, by overarching it as with a rainbow of grace and glory, and atmospherising it as with the very air of the homeland, with a heavenly Father's love. He also elsewhere teaches that love is Revelation's as it is Nature's final law; for "On these two commandments" (love to God and love to man, which are one in love), "hang all the law and the prophets."

The only things He ever criticised and condemned were the rabbinical encrustations and the popular perversions of it. The religious duties taught in it are those frequently enforced in the O.T., though urged in His own peerless way,—unique emphasis being laid on the inward motive in contrast to the prevalent outwardism—all to be done in the sight of God and not of men. Even the trust in our heavenly Father's care, taught with such inimitable simplicity and sublimity, is the burden of many a beautiful and comforting passage in the ancient Oracles of God, though clothed and warmed as only He could do by ever spreading over us the wings of a loving Father for our trust and comfort. Nay, more, the very figures used in it are redolent of O.T. imagery, so steeped was Jesus in His Father's Word; and yet so fresh in His unfoldings, and striking in His use and applications

of it. And the great classical passage we have already adduced solemnly seals by the hand of incarnate Deity the O.T. as the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever. All this looks hard upon the disparagers of the O.T. and the criticisers of any portion of it; and shows how ill-chosen is their magnifying of the Sermon on the Mount, and how suicidal their glorification of the teaching of Jesus there; and it reveals why those who regard, honour, and use the O.T., as Christ did, as the very Word of God, should not depreciate but prize that Sermon, which gives His Divine endorsement and glorification of it.

IT IS THE CONNECTING LINK BETWEEN THE O.T. AND THE N.T.
THE SEAL OF THE ONE AND THE BASIS OF THE OTHER.

Placed as it is near the entrance of the N.T. and in close touch with the O.T., it is indeed like the Divine clasp that fastens and unites them together, and makes them a complete and perfect whole; or like the glowing moulded metal that connects related parts of a complex mechanism, and welds them into one; or like the living bond that by a rare feat of nature joins two living beings together, and makes them one living organic whole, which cannot be severed or weakened without serious injury to both. It is such an important and vital place and function, then, we give to the Sermon on the Mount. Nevertheless, we cannot give it what Christ does not give it, the place of supremacy over all the rest of Scripture, or make its teaching the test or judge of all the other teaching of Scripture and of Christ. It is only those who ignore the great fact of the progressiveness of Revelation and of Christ, and would arrest its progress just as it is entering on its highest stage who can do so. And it is only those who in face of His express teaching presume to deny to our Lord the wisdom of every wise teacher, who proceeds from the elements to the higher teaching, as His pupils are able to bear and receive it, who could imagine such a thing.

DR. JOHN WATSON'S NEW ETHICAL CREED FROM THE SERMON
ON THE MOUNT.

III. As to the new ethical creed propounded by Dr. Watson, and applauded by others as a new revelation and the proposed

panacea for conflict of creeds, unity of faith and peace on earth, it is useful chiefly as exhibiting some of the characteristic tendencies of our times,—how readily some minds leap at and swallow any novel thing, however jejune, provided only it conflicts with received truth; and how easily even clever men are imposed upon by hasty imaginations. One is somewhat surprised at seeing any new creed proposed by a writer who is so sweeping in his condemnation and so reckless in caricature of every creed of Christendom—including his own; and who seems to have so entirely forgotten the origin, misconceived the nature, and mistaken the purpose of creeds in the progress of the Church. This is not, as implied, merely to express religious sentiments, or to write good resolutions, or to make pious vows, but to give in contrast with error an orderly and correct statement of definite, vital, and vitalising religious truths,—to confess faith in specific Divine revelations, and to express great spiritual realities and convictions, in order to the acknowledgment of the truth as it is in Jesus, and the development and manifestation of the Christian life and character through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

BASIS TOO NARROW, MATERIALS INSUFFICIENT FOR A FULL
CHRISTIAN CREED. DEPENDENCE OF CONDUCT ON CREED.

Further, it is anything but a promising conception to build a creed on such a narrow and inadequate basis, a creed out of a sermon, or rather out of a few of Christ's sayings,—out of the veriest fragments of His teaching, out of what does not contain the materials of a creed, out of what lacks the main facts and substance of the Christian Revelation, and which has almost no Christ or Christology; out of what was never meant to be a creed, but only an introduction to a creed fully given afterwards in the words of Christ and His apostles through the Spirit.

But most significant of all, as a sign of the times, and a prevalent but pernicious idea, is the tendency to make little of definite truth, though Christ made everything of it (John 8³²); and the false and superficial assumption that there can be practice without belief, good conduct without sound doctrine, Christian life without Christian faith, character without creed. It is a vain and puerile delusion, fruits without roots, streams without

fountains, effects without causes. It is an outstanding distinction of the Christian faith, and the secret of its effectiveness, that every element of Christian duty has a corresponding element of Christian doctrine that produces and supports it; that every Christian virtue is rooted in a related truth that gives it pith and vitality; that Christian character is ever rooted in Christian faith, and Christian conduct springs from Christian belief. What a man believes, that a man does; and what a man does, that he becomes. Believing, doing, being, that is the law and the order of nature, Scripture, and God. First faith (belief), next practice: if faith, then practice; as faith, so practice; no faith, no practice, is true philosophy, clear Revelation, and proved experience. He calls Himself "the Truth"; He names His people "the children of the truth." He says: "Ye shall know the truth; and the truth shall make you free." He prays: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." And to attempt to sever Christian conduct from Christian faith, or to minimise the vital and essential relation to and dependence on Christian belief of Christian duty and character, is to cut off Christianity at its roots, and destroy it at its sources.

ESTIMATE AND CRITICISM OF THE NEW ETHICAL CREED.

As to the new ethical creed itself, it is a small group of pious sentiments, well expressed, more religious than ethical; some simple and good in themselves, but often including each other, though so few, such as: "I believe in the beatitudes"; "I believe in the clean heart"; "I believe in the words of Jesus,"—three of the six statements of belief in it. Others make promises or vows that require much belief, such as: "I promise to follow Jesus"; for how should or could we follow Him unless we know and believe what He is, and what He has done—what the creeds state under the Person and work of Christ, but of which this new creed teaches nothing. And there is one confession, "I believe in the words of Jesus," which covers all the articles of all the creeds, and much that is not in any of them, as will be seen below; but of which in this creed there is not one item stated, nor where or how we can surely find them, or what authority they possess; since the erring men who heard them are dead, and the Book that contains their imperfect and misleading

conceptions of them is largely untrue and indefinitely untrustworthy ; and, therefore, the words of Jesus are put in antithesis to the words of the prophets and apostles, as that by which they are to be judged ;¹ although Christ in His words and weightiest teaching endorses the one, and promises His Spirit to enable the others in all their teaching to express not their own thoughts or words, but His (Matt. 10²⁰). It is a mixture of a few pious sentiments, with promises and confessions of things different in kind,—a conglomerate of creed, covenant, resolution, and vow, all aiming at goodness. But they are most vague, indefinite, incoherent, and narrow—based, without one single doctrine distinctive of the Christian faith specifically stated—neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost ; neither sin nor redemption, grace nor glory, repentance nor salvation, resurrection nor judgment, heaven nor hell, nor life to come.² So that it is absolutely worthless as a creed, and never could be a confession of faith for any Christian Church, or religious community, or consistent mind.

¹ *The Mind of the Master*, p. 14, etc.

² *Ibid.* pp. 21, 33, 35, 44, 103-5, 119-123.

CHAPTER V.

II.—*PRINCIPAL A. M. FAIRBAIRN'S VIEWS AND COGNATE VIEWS. THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN MODERN THEOLOGY.*

WHEN we pass from Dr. Watson to Principal Fairbairn, we pass from a theological free lance to a religious philosopher—a philosopher more than a theologian. When we leave the light but clever, audacious but unveracious religious fiction of *The Mind of the Master* for the weighty and well-weighed *magnum opus* of the Oxford professor—*The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*—we enter on serious thinking, and are face to face with a religious philosophy. I say advisedly religious philosophy, and not scientific theology,—a distinction and a contrast with which I was much struck when restudying, at the same time as I first read Dr. Fairbairn's book, a new edition of one of the master-works of that great and unique teacher, Dr. W. Robertson Smith, who combined with the keenest critical power and vast knowledge a thorough grasp of scientific theology with its bearing on questions of Biblical criticism, and a rare capacity of stating questions with scientific precision and masterful cogency—a combination so rarely met with now. Unquestionably Dr. Fairbairn's book, although professedly aiming at a reconstruction and restatement of Christian theology on new and different lines from those by which the Christian Church has lived and laboured, suffered and conquered, from the days of Jesus Christ even until now, is predominantly a philosophy of religion, rather than a purely scientific statement of the doctrines of the Christian Revelation.

DR. FAIRBAIRN'S IMPROVED INTERPRETATION OF THE MIND
OF CHRIST; A RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY RATHER THAN A
REVEALED THEOLOGY.

It is a religious philosophy in which human reason plays, perhaps unconsciously, a larger part than Divine Revelation, and the philosophy of man holds quite as influential a place as the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This is to be deeply regretted, and constitutes the weakness of this attempt at a restatement of Christian theology in the new light from a Christo-centric standpoint, and will permanently lessen its value as a contribution to Christian theology. More than one-half of the whole book is taken up with giving a history of German Rationalistic opinion, but omitting two of its most powerful currents—the Rationalistic criticism of the O.T. and the Ritschlian theology of the N.T. This is not wholly reliable, because fragmentary and much too antithetical, as may be seen by comparison with the works of Hagenbach, Lichtenberger, Dorner, and even Harnack, without wading through the dull, often dreary, muddy continents of German speculative theology. These theologies were the resultant of philosophical theories combined with isolated, assimilable elements of Christian Revelation; but in them the philosophy was ever the dominant and formative force. They have come and gone like wintry clouds across wintry skies, with the ever-changing and vanishing phases of human, and specially of German speculation,—leaving little behind them of interest or value to mankind, save the wrecks of their little systems that had their day and ceased to be, to exercise the brains of a few philosophic archaeologists. They thus proclaim again with ever-increasing emphasis that “the world by wisdom knew not God,” and show the folly of men attempting to walk in the sparks of their own kindling, amid the blaze of the noonday sun of Divine Revelation.

Dr. Fairbairn then comes to the Divine Oracles to reconstruct and restate Christian theology from the sources. But, alas! following the German vice and vitiating practice, he comes not simply to inquire “What saith the Lord” in the God-breathed and God-sealed book, in order to interpret its words and to express in best form its statements and revelations,—which is the only way to ascertain the mind of God or of His Christ,—but

with a philosophy. No doubt it is a religious philosophy, and better, perhaps, than most of the German philosophies and Christologies described, being ballasted by the Common Sense of Scottish Realism, the saving contrast of German Idealism, but still with a philosophy,—ay, and with a preconceived theology, too, largely permeated and moulded by that philosophy; and that philosophy and philosophised theology largely dominate and predetermine his interpretation and restatement of the theology and Christology, not only of Revelation generally but of Christ specially. And it must be confessed that the result is disappointing, as many competent theologians have felt and said; and in some vital respects it is seriously unsatisfactory, where new truths, principles, and standpoints are supposed to be given. Dr. Watson has no doubt said and pressed some startling, audacious, and utterly untenable things; and made some statements which, if taken by themselves, involve grave errors on vital subjects. But then he contradicts himself, and often unsays later what he said earlier, the net result being *nil*! Many of the objectionable things were apparently said to startle, with a view to change, as he imagined for the better, the emphasis and standpoint of certain truths, so that they can scarcely be taken seriously, especially as he is given to exaggeration and caricature, and they are in such desultory papers as compose his book. Further, the most serious error, in which he seemed painfully consistent, namely, his apparent denial of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ,—the core of the gospel and the ground of our redemption,—he has, to his credit and the relief of many, publicly corrected and disowned, saying truly that to deny or ignore that would be to overlook the deepest meaning of some of our Lord's most solemn utterances. Besides, notwithstanding all his theological vagaries he has been so rooted, grounded, and nourished on the scriptural theology of the Westminster Shorter Catechism that, when he would go astray in frenzy flights, it holds and ballasts and brings him back to himself again. And certainly he is not much weighted or misled by the influence of philosophy, as so many have been to the prejudice, and often to the perversion, of their theology.

It is otherwise with Dr. Fairbairn. His is a large and important book, treating seriously, and in an orderly and comprehensive manner, of the profound problems of religion and

philosophy, and is a serious effort to grapple in a worthy way with a great subject by an able and learned religious philosopher. It is, in fact, a brave, arduous, and somewhat pioneer attempt to reconstruct theology on new lines, and to restate the Christian faith in the new light. So that what is stated is deliberate and well weighed; and, therefore, deserves and requires the more serious consideration; and comes with all the greater weight and consequences for good or evil, according to its character or tendency. And from this point of view I am constrained to confess that I apprehend much more real evil, so far as it is erroneous in teaching and tendency, to the Bible theology from Dr. Fairbairn's serious and elaborate treatise than from Dr. Watson's brilliant but unguarded and somewhat erratic book.

Dr. Fairbairn's book not only deals more seriously with the subjects, but cuts more deeply into the substance, bases, and sources of our faith. It is able, learned, and in some parts profound. It is well written, generally interesting, full of weighty matter, with apt phrases and well cut epithets, and takes comprehensive views of things. It is pervaded throughout with a deeply religious spirit, aims earnestly at magnifying Christ, contains many good, some striking, and not a few weighty and far-reaching utterances, with wide horizons and vast vistas; and rises at times to sublime heights of thought and feeling, especially in the Divine Christology of John. But with all this it is often too general and abstract, over metaphysical and vague. It is sometimes one-sided and misleading, incorrect, and lacking in proof and thoroughness. Occasionally it is confused and misty, and assumes too much. At times it misconceives and misrepresents disfavoured views—specially John Calvin's and Dr. Robert Candlish's,—“the forensic theology,” and the theology of the Reformation generally,—a striking contrast to that greatest master of it, Principal William Cunningham. It is pervaded almost throughout by one vice of style, arising from the philosophic love of the general and abstract,—the continual habit of stating things antithetically,—making and straining antitheses which are often only half true, and sometimes wholly false, thus preventing due qualification, and rendering scientific and accurate theology impossible.

ITS FUNDAMENTAL ERROR IS CREATING STRONG ANTITHESIS AND ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES. CRITICISM AND CONDEMNATION OF THE APOSTLES.

Its fundamental fallacy is the strong antithesis and marked antagonism it creates between the teaching and the position of Christ and of His apostles, not only to the disparagement of the apostles and their writings, but to their criticism and condemnation in various ways; and to the consequent discrediting of their Divine authority as inspired teachers. They are, in fact, by Dr. Fairbairn, and many others more sweepingly than by him, charged with "failing" to interpret, with misinterpreting and misrepresenting the mind of Christ and God's Revelation. So that they so far have not only failed to understand, but have, therefore, so far misrepresented and corrupted the faith and religion of Christ. Consequently a new and better interpretation of the mind of Christ must be sought and stated than His chosen and inspired disciples have made and given. This is what is now being largely attempted, almost two millenniums after those to whom we entirely owe every iota of our knowledge of it and Him have gone. The teaching of those dull and erring disciples must be judged and corrected by the real teaching of Christ as discovered by our modern interpreters! Their failures and errors, defects and misrepresentations, degeneracies and perversions of the mind of the Master, must be all put right by the new, fuller, better, and truer interpretation of these omniscient nineteenth century rediscoverers of Christ. And this amazing feat is to be performed from the discredited writings of those discredited disciples!

We have already shown the baselessness and untenableness of this whole theory and attitude, so utterly contrary to the clearest and weightiest teaching of Christ on the subject (which they specially profess to honour), and which are so demonstrably false, as shown by the simple facts of the case. But before further exposing its presumption, absurdity, and seriousness, it will be well to give some of Dr. Fairbairn's specific statements on the question. Take the following as specimens of much similar: "One thing is made to stand out with a perfectly new distinctness, viz. the degree in which the mind

of the Master transcends the mind of the disciples ; not how they develop His teaching, but how they fail to do it ; the elements they miss or ignore, forget, or do not see" (p. 293). "This return to Christ [in contrast with the apostles' teaching] had made evident to us the true historical method of criticism. It must proceed from the fountain downwards." "Above in the fountain is purity, but below in the river impurities gather" (p. 296). With the above, examples are given—but without any attempt at proof, only simply named—of their failures, misconceptions, degeneracies, and misrepresentations of Christ and His teaching, in such subjects as "their 'conception of God' ; 'human brotherhood which expresses the Divine Sonship' ; 'the kingdom, the social form in which it may be realised in time'" (p. 293). Yet our whole knowledge of these is received from their conceptions and representations, and it was the Holy Spirit who gave them these according to Christ's teaching and promise. So that Christ and the Spirit are supremely responsible for these, and come in for the same condemnation, for these are their teachings through the apostles. "Their conduct is more mixed, their tempers more troubled." "They so live as to show more of the infirmities of men,"—as if these had anything to do with the question or with their Spirit-inspired teaching. What a confusion of things different in kind, and on different planes !

Then the apostles and their writings are criticised, depreciated, misunderstood, and thus misrepresented. Statements are made and representations given which make strange and startling revelations, and show that Dr. Fairbairn's whole conception of God's Word is radically defective ; that *he* "has failed" to grasp the first root-principle of Divine Revelation, and that he ignores or rejects the prime basal teaching of Christ and of all Scripture, viz. that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—God-breathed (*θεόπνευστος*) (2 Tim. 3¹⁶) ; that "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Though given in divers portions and in various manners (Heb. 1¹), it was the one same Divine Spirit who inspired, and is the real Author and Teacher in and through all ; and it was He who chose, fitted, and enabled each writer, as His organ, to supply his appointed and complementary part in the one Divine God-breathed Book. Having fallen into such errors and failures himself, it is no wonder that he charges the apostles with these.

PAUL AND HIS EPISTLES AND TEACHING CRITICISED AND DE-
PRECIATED BECAUSE THE CRITIC HAS "MISSED" THE
FIRST PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE REVELATION.

Paul comes in first for criticism, disparagement, and condemnation. "Where Paul is greatest is where he is most directly under the influence of Jesus." [How can he know?] "evolving the content of what he had received from Him" (p. 293). As if it were merely the influence of Jesus instead of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and Paul's *evolution* rather than the revelation of Jesus Christ. Paul is "the schoolman" and "pharasaic," though he was notoriously the reverse, and was therefore persistently persecuted by the Pharisees. "Hebrews is the corrective of Paul's view, who left the whole sacerdotal side of Judaism untouched and unexplained. The writer of Hebrews has discovered elements in Christianity Paul had missed" (p. 322). What error and misconception! Hebrews in no way *corrects* Paul's view, but is in full and perfect harmony with it. Paul *does* treat of the law and its evangelical significance, using it to good purpose in many places, including the sacerdotal and ceremonial. But though he had said nothing of it, why should that be made a ground of charge against Paul of either error or ignorance?—except it be upon the baseless and absurd assumption that every inspired writer must write upon every part and aspect of Revelation; and that, too, when writing special letters to churches in special circumstances;—especially when God has distinctly stated, and the facts clearly prove, that this has not been God's chosen method of Revelation. On the contrary, as in other spheres of His operation, God has in Revelation also acted on the principle of division of labour, and has given His Word in divers portions and various manners, by choosing and inspiring different men to give the various complementary parts which form the diversified but harmonious God-breathed whole—the one Divine Inspirer securing unity in diversity.

Further, he says, "we cannot accept Luther's dictum, that justification by faith is the article of a standing or falling Church," because "it is more Paul's than Christ's" (p. 450). As if there were any antagonism or antithesis between Paul's teaching and Christ's on the great fundamental doctrine of justification by

faith,—as if Christ had not taught it as distinctly and emphatically as ever Paul did (John 3^{14-18. 36} 5²⁴ 6^{35-40. 47} 7³⁸ 8²⁴, Matt. 11²⁸); and as if the teaching of Paul were not the teaching and “the Revelation of Jesus Christ.”

JOHN ALSO DEPRECIATED.

As of Paul, so of John he says: “What in him is permanent and persuasive is of Christ; what is local and trivial is of himself” (p. 293). As if what was local could not be universal in its principle and application. On this principle almost the whole of Revelation might be discredited and disposed of, for it is rooted in and revealed through the local and the temporal; but the local becomes in the Spirit’s light the symbol of the universal, and the temporal the type of the eternal, as the visible is the revelation of the invisible. Why the world itself is only local on the high scale of immensity—a tiny corner of God’s boundless universe; and yet it has been chosen as the theatre of the grand moral drama of the universe, and become the centre of universal and eternal interest. The Holy Land was a small obscure nook of the earth, but there God became incarnate, and made it the religious light-centre of all the countless moral beings that people the regions of immensity. And Christ Himself was a branch out of the stem of Jesse, who lived and died within the narrow confines of Palestine; but He became the Revealer of God, Lord of heaven and earth, Head of all being, and Unifier of the universe. Trivial! there is nothing trivial in John—in the Spirit’s utterances through John. To God, and in His hands, nothing is trivial—

“In little words and little deeds
Great principles come grandly out,”

had we but eyes to see them as the Spirit-illuminated apostle had. And as for the unfounded implication that there was anything in what the Holy Ghost wrote through John that was not permanent but evanescent, it is to presume to be wiser than God, and to deny that “the Word of the Lord endureth for ever.”

JAMES AND HIS EPISTLE SEVERELY CRITICISED AND CON-
DEMNED, BECAUSE THE CRITIC MISCONCEIVES THE METHOD
OF REVELATION.

But it is James and his Divinely-inspired Epistle that comes in for the most severe criticism, castigation, and contempt. "James," he says, "has more of the spirit and attitude of the liberal synagogue than of the persuaded Christian, and possibly his book is in the canon to show how large and tolerant the early church was, and all churches ought to be"!! (p. 328). What an amazing conception of the formation of the Canon! One of the most valuable, practical, and spiritually-searching books of God's Word said to be there merely by a great stretch of Christian charity; and the writer, a Christ-chosen and Divinely-inspired apostle, scarcely entitled to be called a Christian! "Its most remarkable feature is not the opposition to Pauline doctrine" [which the merest tyro in theology knows to be a fable] "which so offended Luther" [but Luther got the wisdom to see and recant his error], "but the poverty of its Christology and the paucity of its references to the historical Christ" (p. 328). On this principle the Sermon on the Mount, and much of Christ's teaching, would come in for condemnation, as well as much of God's Word as a whole. "Because the writer has so little sense of the one that he feels no need of the other"! Both are errors and vain imaginations. "He is the apostolic representative of the historical continuity, that in its devotion to form and letter forgets substance and spirit"! (p. 328). Mere fancy and misrepresentation—the fruit of easy but unfounded generalisation, and of forced and misleading antithesis. "The position given him on account of relationship he never deserved nor earned, but only enabled him to use in government aims and abilities that hardly qualified him for service"!! (p. 329). Baseless assertion and contemptuous caricature of a Divinely-inspired and justly honoured apostle, from one from whom better things might have been expected. Attention to the high and holy ethical teaching of the Divine Spirit through James would and should have taught the evil of this, and prevented it; and so long as such evil speaking and caricature of good and great men are so gratuitously indulged in, there is clear proof of the value and necessity of James' Epistle and of its Divine inspira-

tion. "His address at the Apostolic Council, and his behaviour to Paul, were quite in keeping with his Epistle" (p. 329). His behaviour to Paul was what every servant of Christ's should be to another,—most courteous and brotherly, and certainly a striking contrast to this,—for which Paul praises and honours him. And James' address in the Council was wise and good, and inspired by the Holy Ghost, and led to the prudent and peace-making decision that is expressly declared to be what "seemed good unto the Holy Ghost" (Acts 15).

CRITICISM OF THE APOSTLES' CRITICS.

I have already, in quoting, briefly indicated in each case some of the errors and confusions, misconceptions and misrepresentations, in this criticism of the inspired apostles and their Divine writings; and have referred to some of the false assumptions, misleading prejudices, unscientific methods, and literary vices that have led to the making of such charges against the apostles, and which are the creation of the critics' own mistakes.

I. THE BASELESSNESS AND ERRONEOUSNESS OF THEIR CRITICISM.

But in looking at them together, what strikes one first is the baselessness and erroneousness of the whole. There is no positive evidence given from Scripture that there is any antagonism or antithesis between the teaching of Christ and of His apostles; whereas, as shown above, there is abundant evidence to the contrary from the very teaching of Christ Himself; who promised to send them His Spirit to lead them into all truth, to enable them so to know and express His mind that "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." He declared that their teaching would thus be so truly His teaching that those who received them and it would receive Him and His; and that whosoever refused to do so, it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment than for them,—thus putting their words on a level with His own in truth and authority, and in settling men's eternal destiny (Matt. 10¹¹ and John 12⁴⁸). There is no specific evidence adduced to show any declension or degeneracy—"falling off"—from His teaching; while proof has been given from the facts, and the very words of

Christ that they are a unity in diversity ; and that instead of being lower or degenerate teaching Christ expressly taught and promised that in some important elements of His gospel and expressions of His mind they would, when the Spirit came, be newer, fuller, and higher—the complement, completion, and crown of His own. This was actually fulfilled after His resurrection and the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, when “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance” ; and not only was such a new light cast upon His previous teaching as made it to them a new Revelation, but facts and new truths were given and made luminous to them that form vital and vitalising parts of the Revelation of God and the mind of Christ.

No Proof of the Apostles' alleged Failures or Errors.

There is no attempt at detailed proof of their errors or failures, misconceptions or misrepresentations of the mind of Christ, by which the apostles are supposed to have so far “missed” and misinterpreted, lost and corrupted the Christianity of Christ ! For the express purpose of preventing these, and to give a true, complete, and final revelation of His mind, Christ promised and sent the Spirit ; and if that has not been done, then Christ's promise has not been fulfilled, or the Spirit's power has failed, and the Father's purpose to reveal His will truly through them has been frustrated. But the deeper, fuller, and more scientific study of the whole facts establishes more and more that not one of these has failed ; and that the apostles, as Paul said and Christ promised, had “the mind of Christ,” and interpreted and expressed it not less truly and more fully, as He taught, than Himself ; as it was the one same Spirit who was on all, in all, and through all. It also proves, as in the exploded Tübingen theories of the antagonism between the apostles, the baselessness of the modern theories of antagonism or antithesis between Christ and His apostles ; and shows that both have greatly erred, because they heeded not Christ's most explicit teaching on the question, and ignored the Holy Ghost, who by His inspiration secured the unity of teaching amid the diversity of teachers.

Defence of the Apostles—Paul, John, James.

It is the same when we pass from the apostles as a whole to the criticism and disparagement of them individually—there is no truth in them, and no foundation for them. There is absolutely no proof, but mere assertion given that Paul was at one time more under the influence of Jesus than at another ; but Paul said, “For me to live is Christ” (Phil. 1²¹, Gal. 2²⁰), and he gave all his teaching in the Spirit’s inspiration and words. Paul did not “evolve the content” of what he received from Christ, but he “delivered” what he had “received of the Lord” as the Spirit gave him utterance, even “in other tongues” (1 Cor. 11²³, Acts 2⁴). Hebrews was not a “corrective of Paul,” nor did its writer “discover” anything in the gospel that Paul “did not see”; for there is nothing in it about sacerdotalism, or the humanity or priesthood of Christ, that he does not know and refer to—though, of course, he did not presume to write of these as another had done, because God had not inspired him but another to do that; and even as to that other it was not his “discovery,” but God’s Revelation from of old. And to say of the doctrine of justification by faith, which through Luther under God created the Reformation and revolutionised the world, and is the great central doctrine of the gospel, by which men are saved—“It is more Paul’s than Christ’s,” and, therefore, we need not accept it, is an astounding assertion,—as if Christ did not teach it as emphatically as ever Paul did. “It may be true, but it still remains what it was at first—a deduction by a disciple, not a principle enunciated by the Master” (p. 450). This simply shows how prejudice can pervert criticism, and blind even good men to the disastrous issues of their theories, and to the clearest and most prevalent teaching of Christ, even when claiming specially to honour Him, and to know it better than His apostles.

This and many like statements would shut us up exclusively to what can be proved to be the words of Christ, and would then ignore some of the chief of these. For surely every reader of the Gospels knows that if there was one doctrine more than another Christ urged and eternally insisted on, it was the necessity and the efficacy of faith in Him as a redeeming Saviour in order to justification and salvation (John 3¹⁴, 15, 16, 18, 36 5²⁴ 6³⁵⁻⁴⁷ 7³⁸ 8²⁴). This great truth, which is the burden and

central message of all Revelation to us as sinners, and the main and first thing that it concerns us to know and do as guilty men, is actually declared at this late date to be "not a principle enunciated by the Master, but a deduction by a disciple," which may or may not be true, and which we may or may not accept as we choose, because a mere human deduction ; instead of, as it is, a chief Divine Revelation, not only of Paul, but of Christ and of all Scripture. I confess that when I read this I could scarcely believe my eyes. If this is a fair sample of the improved interpretation of the mind of Christ, the less of it the better for the salvation of men. There is no opposition between Paul and James on this great truth, but a glorious complex harmony, as the merest novice in theology can show ; and the harmony is all the more marked that the complementary sides of the great truth are supplied by minds so different, and the Divine wisdom is revealed in the Divine unity thus secured by complementary revelations being given by the Spirit through diverse men in diverse portions.

The contemptuous statement as to the poverty of James' Christology shows how entirely this root and elementary conception of Divine Revelation has been "missed," and what a fertile source of imaginary defects and errors such mistakes become. How much of Scripture and of Christ's teaching would on this erroneous principle be disparaged and condemned, because the critic "failed to see" the precise place and purpose of the diverse but complementary portions of the one Divine book ! While the amazing statements about the wondrous tolerance that gave James' Epistle a place in the Canon,—as if that had been the principle and method of the formation of the Canon ; and the alleged incapacity for Christian service of one of the wisest and weightiest leaders the Church ever had ; and his fabled mistreatment of Paul—the reverse of the fact ; and the attributing to him of using relationship to Christ for personal aims and the ambition to rule ; and the daubing him more a Jew than a Christian who was a pillar of the Church, and one of the chief of the apostles ; and the contemptuousness of the whole references to him and his Divinely-inspired Epistle,—all show on what baseless delusions imposing structures may be reared, and how far astray false theories, and easy generalisations, and forced antitheses may carry religious philosophers. They certainly beget anything but hope that those who could so roughly handle the

inspired Word, and the most honoured servants of God, would give a better interpretation of the mind of the Master than the Spirit-filled apostles. This is not theology, nor science, nor philosophy, nor fact : but fiction, and error, and caricature, and wrong to God-breathed writings and God-honoured men, who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

2. THE PRESUMPTION OF THE CRITICS CLAIMING TO INTERPRET THE MIND OF CHRIST BETTER THAN HIS DISCIPLES.

Next to the baselessness, what strikes one most is the presumption underlying and ever appearing in these theories and statements. Not so much the presumption of so roughly using the inspired writers, as is often done by such critics, though that is bold enough. Nor even of so irreverently handling the Divine writings, as so many of them do. But the presumption of supposing and implying that they can interpret the mind of the Master better than His inspired disciples. Were it not so largely insisted on and practically exemplified in so many rough criticisms of them and their writings, and the ever-increasing flood of attempted improved interpretations of their Master's mind, sober minds could scarcely believe that sensible men would be so far left to themselves as to dream of such a thing ; or that any men who had regard for modesty and sobriety could seriously mean to make such pretensions, or hope if they did to escape being the object of amazement or amusement to reasonable men. But to present-day presumption, and the omniscience of some modern criticism, nothing is deemed impossible : and there is a wild fascination to a certain class of minds to make a plunge into unknown waters for some new thing, even should it be, as here, into the abysses of a chaotic sea, without shore or sounding, without length or breadth or depth ; and where light, and rest, and hope are lost.

Hence we have to gaze on the pathetic spectacle of Christian philosophers and rationalistic Bible critics, both in this country and on the Continent, actually presuming in their unbounded self-confidence and conceit, not only to criticise, correct, and largely condemn, and even contemn, the inspired writers and Divine writings of the N.T., but also to be vain enough to imagine that they have “rediscovered Christ,” and can interpret

the mind of the Master, or "the consciousness of Jesus," better than His Divinely-inspired apostles. They publish improved interpretations thereof like snow-flakes;—all unconscious evidently of either the humour or the seriousness of the delusion,—as if wisdom about Him had been born at the close of the nineteenth century! They reach the climax of credulity in imagining that sensible men will believe them or their incredible hypotheses.

What would be thought of the men, or their philosophy, who at this time of day would pretend to have a truer knowledge and to give a better interpretation of Socrates and his teaching than Plato and his disciples? What would be said of the persons and their criticism who could dream and presume to say now that they knew and could interpret the law and the mind of the God of Israel better than Moses, to whom He gave it and revealed Himself, and to whom God spake face to face, as a man does with his friend? And what, *à fortiori*, can be thought or said of the presumption and folly of those who can imagine and proclaim that now, nearly two thousand years after He has gone, they know and can interpret the mind of Christ better than the disciples taught by Himself, supernaturally illuminated by His Spirit on express purpose to know and to express His mind, and sent forth by Him as His witnesses (Acts 1⁸), as thoroughly equipped by the Holy Spirit for their work as the Father had sent Him (John 20²¹), and Divinely-commissioned and empowered to proclaim His gospel, and to plant His Church throughout the world, and to teach all things He had taught them and that His Spirit would teach them and enable them to teach others; and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to declare and communicate, truly and fully, the mind and will of God for men's salvation? Such pretensions need no refutation—the statement of them is their refutation, and the amazement is that men could become so vain in their imaginations as to make them, and credulous enough to dream that reasonable beings could believe them.

3. THE ABSURDITY OF RELYING ON THE APOSTLES' REPRESENTATIONS OF CHRIST'S TEACHING WHILE DISPARAGING AND DISCREDITING THEM IN THEIR OWN.

But perhaps the most remarkable thing in these theories is what can only be called their simple absurdity. The very

thought of their giving a better interpretation of the mind of Christ than His inspired disciples, two millenniums after He has gone, is surely, on the face of it, not only a presumptuous, but an amazing and even ludicrous idea. But when to this is added the owned and unquestionable fact that our whole knowledge of Christ and His teaching is given and received through them as embodied in their writings in the N.T., and that it is solely out of the very writings of these disparaged and discredited disciples, who have so far "missed," mistaken, corrupted, and misrepresented the teaching of Christ, that our modern interpreters profess to make their improved interpretations of His mind, and to perform the marvellous feat of giving us a truer and better version and representation of it than His apostles have given, the folly of the pretension is simply astounding.

*The improved Interpretation is formed solely out of the
Materials of the disparaged Disciples.*

The absurdity of this is still more manifested, when it is out of the materials these degenerate and largely discredited disciples have supplied, and without professing to have any other materials to amend them, that they form and issue their improved interpretations of "the consciousness of Jesus," and their superior statements of His teaching, with such assured confidence. For they imply that their discoveries and representations have at last given to the world the true Christ, and the real mind of the Master, while at the same time their interpretations conflict with and often contradict each other; and all of them are more or less out of harmony with, and often antagonistic to, the teaching both of the apostles and their Master, as expressed and embodied, through the Holy Ghost, in the Divine Book, from which alone we or they know, or can know, anything of it or Him.

Since, as implied, the apostolic writings were so unsatisfactory, and so far "miss," "fall off" from, and misrepresent the teaching and the mind of Christ as to warrant and require these discoverers of the true mind of Christ to give a new, better, and largely corrected version of His consciousness and teaching so as to remove and undo the evil of the defective, degenerate, and misleading misrepresentations of them given by the apostles, one would have thought that the last thing they

would have done would be to rely on these apostles' writings, or to have or express any confidence in any interpretations of His mind or restatements of His teaching they could reconstruct out of such unsatisfactory and misleading materials. But instead of this, we find unbounded confidence in their own interpretations, and in their superiority to the apostolic interpretation, although avowedly made up of the apostolic materials, and conflicting with the Spirit-given apostolic representations of Christ's teaching, and often contradicting each other.

But the climax of this absurdity is reached when it is imagined—and this is what is done—that the apostles are entirely trustworthy in their representations of Christ's teaching, but not in their own; thoroughly reliable "reporters" of what He said, but not as interpreters of His mind, or exponents of His teaching—although the infallible moderns are! They can even bring pure streams out of impure fountains, and raise solid structures out of mixed and mutually destructive materials, and upon imaginary, self-destroyed foundations. A fourfold absurdity this, not easily equalled in theological aberrations. The apostles were not, as we have seen, mere "reporters," nor even merely favoured and uniquely-placed interpreters, but Divinely-inspired revealers of the mind of Christ in the Spirit's words.

*Christ and the Critics of the Apostles in Antagonism
and Contradiction.*

The modern prophets have no word of the Lord to warrant their basal but baseless assumption that the apostles were reliable in some of their representations, while defective and misleading in others, but only their own vain imaginations, contrary to Divine revelations. Christ promised to send His Spirit to lead His disciples into all truth, so that by speech and writing they might teach truly and fully His mind and will to all mankind. These critics say that His disciples have not taught His mind either truly or fully, but have "missed" much, misconceived more, misrepresented some, and lowered all; so that Christ's promise has failed, and His purpose been so far frustrated. Christ taught His disciples that "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you"; so that what they spoke and wrote in His name was what His Spirit taught through them.

These critics aver that some of what they said by the Spirit of truth is not true, but defective and degenerate, erroneous and misleading; so that the Spirit has so far failed to interpret, and has through them misrepresented, the mind of Christ; and instead of leading them into all truth, has misled them and others through them: and, therefore, Christ's own teaching, as expressed through them, cannot be received as the truth. Christ said that whosoever did not receive their words which He by His Spirit spake through them, it would be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for them; thus putting their words as spoken through His Spirit on a level with the words spoken through the same Spirit by Himself—making the eternal destiny of men depend on them; so that the teaching of the apostles and of the Spirit of Truth, and of Christ Himself, who is "the Truth," is not in this to be received as true! And yet these are the critics who profess specially to honour the teaching of Christ, while directly contradicting and disowning it on the very question at issue!

*Christ identifies His Apostles' Teaching with and as
His own.*

It thus appears that our Lord identifies the truth and authority of their teaching through His Spirit with the truth and authority of His own teaching, and that we cannot disown theirs without disowning His; that in so far as theirs is impinged upon or not received, so far precisely is His. In fact, His teaching and theirs stand or fall together; for Christ endorses theirs, identifies it with His own, and so declares its inviolable truth and Divine authority,—sending them His Spirit to secure this—that theirs cannot be disowned or impinged upon without His also being so *ipso facto*. It is beyond question that this is His teaching as given in His own words in the Gospels. Therefore if, on the one hand, His teaching is to be held decisive and supreme, then that settles that theirs must be held as true and Divinely authoritative also, as the true and full, authoritative and final expression of His mind and will; for *that* is His teaching, and nothing less than that, as expressed in His own recorded words. If, on the other hand, His teaching declaring the truth, Divine authority, and finality of their teaching, as the Spirit-

given expression of His mind, is not accepted, but disowned and rejected, it is idle, misleading, and self-contradictory to profess to hold the supremacy of Christ's teaching. If Christ's teaching is true, then theirs is so also, for *that* is His teaching. If theirs is not, then neither can His be. If their representations of His mind, as given in His own words, are reliable and authoritative, theirs are so also, for His words declare that. How vain, then, to profess to honour His teaching when disowning His declaration that they are the authoritative, Divinely-inspired interpreters and revealers of His mind and will, and that their teaching is the Divine, God-breathed embodiment of it! How contrary to fact to aver that their record of His teaching is received as true, or His teaching itself as authoritative, so long as, in contradiction of it, theirs is not!

And how supremely absurd and self-contradictory to trust, or to profess to rely on, their record of His teaching, while not accepting but criticising, disparaging, and even condemning largely their own teaching;—especially when, *first*, Christ puts their representations of both His teaching and their own on a level as to truth, reliability, and Divine authority—attributing both equally to the Spirit's inspiration! (Luke 4¹⁸, John 14²⁶, Matt. 10²⁰); *second*, when He identifies their teaching with His own, and regards it as His own,—the completion and embodiment of His own,—given to them and through them by His Spirit (Matt. 10^{14. 15. 20}, Luke 10¹⁶, John 13²⁰); and, *third*, when what they give of His teaching in these very Gospels are His very words declaring their teaching to be true, authoritative, and the inspired expression of His mind. Directly in the face of what the apostles give as Christ's teaching, in His words, these critics criticise, disparage, condemn, and even in measure condemn the disciples' teaching, and *ipso facto* their Master's also; and yet profess to specially honour His teaching, and their representations of it, while giving large practical illustration of the reverse.

These Critics ignore and stultify the work of the Holy Spirit in Scripture.

Further, they not only practically disown the teaching of Christ, as given by His disciples, while professing specially to honour it, but they also ignore and stultify the work of the Holy

Spirit. The very idea of the N.T. writers being simply "reporters," as Dr. Fairbairn and others call them, of Christ's words, implicitly ignores the Spirit; although, as shown, these critics refuse even to rely on them as reporters, or to believe their report of Christ's teaching, when they state that Christ taught the truth, and Divine authority of their teaching, as the expression of His mind. This ignoring of the Spirit is more manifest in the profession to accept what the apostles give as Christ's teaching, but not their own. For, as Christ said, it was the same Spirit who was to lead them into all truth who was to bring to their remembrance what He had said to them Himself. Therefore it was the same Divine Spirit who gave truth, reliability, and authority to their representations of Christ's teaching that led them into the knowledge and expression of all their own teaching of His mind; so that the one has precisely the same reliability and authority as the other—the same Spirit equally inspiring both. The Spirit brought to their remembrance what Christ had said to them, opened their minds to enable them to understand it, and inspired them to express it in His words. So that it is only their conceptions of Christ's teaching, as given them by the Spirit, that we have, or can have, or ever had. And it is precisely the same teaching of the Spirit that is expressed in their own teaching; so that they have both equally the same Divine origin, reliability, and authority. This plainly precludes all antithesis or antagonism between the one and the other, and all attempts to make or hold the one reliable when the other is not, and shows that the ignoring of the Holy Ghost lies at the root of all such ideas and theories.

They also stultify the Spirit's work by such ideas. For if the Spirit only enabled them to give Christ's teaching truly, while leaving them to misinterpret and misrepresent the mind of Christ in their own teaching, then this could only lead to confusion and error—the latter undoing the former; and thus the Spirit would practically defeat His own work, and Christ would largely frustrate His purpose and promise in sending the Spirit. It makes the apostles and the Spirit of Truth conflict with each other, and contradict themselves; and leaves Christ in conflict with both, and in self-contradiction. How then could we possibly trust them, or Him, or the Holy Spirit, in their representations in other things when they have misled, or allowed us to

err and misunderstand, in this fundamental thing? If we do not accept their representations in their own teaching, how can we trust their representations in giving His? If the Spirit of truth has failed to lead them into and to convey the truth Christ intended to teach to them and through them by the Spirit, how can we rely with full confidence on what He brought to their minds of Christ's teaching, or be sure that He has not there also misled them, or failed to bring Christ's teaching properly to their minds? And if Christ Himself has failed to fulfil His promise to His disciples, and taught error on this first and fundamental question as to what He said the Spirit would do for them, how can we be sure that He has not failed, and erred, and misled them in other things? and how vain in that case to put confidence in His other teachings? If He has failed and misled in this primary and fundamental matter, how can we reasonably be asked to trust His teaching or Himself in anything?

They thus destroy the very sources and bases of their own theories. They do infinitely worse—they would virtually destroy the bases and the sources of the Christian faith; and they make it the easiest thing possible, as shown below, to explode Christianity from its foundations, and, by a consistent application of their principles, to annihilate our faith. But the whole pretentious theory, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaves not one wrack behind, and leaves a struggling humanity without one inch of solid Divine rock on which to rest the sole of its foot amid the shifting sands of human opinion and the froth of aberrant speculation. And Dr. Horton, one of the loudest proclaimers of this would-be "rediscovery of Christ," though only a feeble English echo of a vanishing phase of German Rationalism, to the amazement of all sensible men, puts the appropriate topstone on the pretentious but baseless superstructure, by virtually claiming for himself and others inspiration the *same in kind* and purpose as the prophets and apostles; though we have not heard that the Christian Church has yet proposed to annex any of the crude productions of this inspiration, as improved interpretations of the mind of Christ, to the Canon of Holy Scripture, which he has presumed so irreverently to denounce! A single glimpse at Dr. Horton's best, alongside of a page of Isaiah's or Paul's least, settles that vain idea at once and for ever to every sound mind.

CHAPTER VI.

DR. FAIRBAIRN'S IMPROVED RESTATEMENT OF THE MIND OF CHRIST.

CHRIST AND THE CONTROVERSIES.

PERHAPS the best practical commentary on the untenableness and emptiness of these theories is to be found in noting some of the results of Dr. Fairbairn's supreme effort to give an improved interpretation of the mind of Christ. We shall only indicate, not fully refute, these here, leaving that for the sequel, so far as thought necessary; but in doing so we shall put the teaching of Christ and His apostles in contrast, and thus so far give the teaching of Christ on some of the leading doctrines controverted in antithesis to and refutation of many prevalent errors. He says, "This age knows Christ as no other age has ever done" (p. 20). "We have been invited to know Him as He knew Himself, to understand His mission as it was in His mind, and before it had been touched by the spirit of Paul" (p. 292). As if Paul's spirit had spoiled Christ's conception! whereas Paul's representation of Christ was what he received from Christ Himself by revelation, and is expressly called "the revelation of the Lord"; and as if Paul's spirit, through which the revelation was given, had been simply the workings of his own speculative spirit, instead of, as it was, the Holy Ghost in him—the same Spirit as Christ had and taught by! (Luke 4¹⁸, 1 Cor. 2¹³). Besides, as shown, it is a delusion to imagine that we have anything of Christ's teaching or mind except the conceptions of it given to and through the disciples by the same Holy Spirit as gave it to Paul. And when we come to the improved interpretation of the mind or consciousness of Christ, and a better restatement of the theology of Christ, so far as it differs from the apostolic interpretation as generally received by the Church, it is grievously disappointing.

Like Milton's critics comparing *Paradise Regained* with *Paradise Lost*, so we must say, "What a mighty fall was there!"

I. THEOLOGY. GOD. THE FATHER. THE ROOT-CONCEPTION OF GOD IGNORES AND PRECLUDES CHRIST'S REVELATION OF GOD.

The conception of God, supposed to be derived from "the consciousness of Christ," is anything but improved, is far removed from Christ's conception, and is largely in direct antagonism to it. For He is not a God of justice or of judgment; and the idea of God being a righteous judge, who punishes sin, hates evil or evil workers (Matt. 7²¹⁻²³, Luke 13²³⁻³⁰), and condemns the guilty; or whose wrath abideth on the unbelieving and the wicked (John 3³⁶), and sends away "the cursed" to everlasting punishment (Matt. 25⁴⁶); who renders to everyone according to his works (Rev. 22¹²), and "who can destroy body and soul in hell" (Matt. 10²⁸), "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched" (Mark 9⁴³⁻⁵⁰),—all this is explicitly denied and utterly precluded by his whole conception of God. And yet this is a true, if awful, side of God's character, as given in the very words of Christ, who so loved sinners as to die to redeem them and live to save them, and declared God's love to them in a unique way (John 3¹⁶). So that by his root and basal conception of God he not only ignores and denies, but repudiates and precludes Christ's conception. He so expatiates on God's love as to exclude His justice; so confines his view to God's mercy as to evacuate His righteousness; and goes off at a tangent with a single one-sided idea, like a wandering star, into such abysses of speculation as strand him with such a view of God as not only conflicts with, but contradicts and excludes Christ's view; and allows himself such wild utterances as these which express the character of this whole theology: "Quantitatively there is no more of the love of God in heaven than in hell"! (p. 424). "Were He (God) to hate even the devil, He would, while the feeling endured, have in Him an element alien to the Divine, and so would be less than God" (p. 424). "To say, 'God is love,' means He must be the Saviour" (p. 465). "To abandon souls He loved, even though they had abandoned Him, would be to punish man's faithlessness by ceasing to be

faithful to Himself" (p. 465). Another jejune statement may be added here, as showing the absurdities to which a false philosophy may carry even sensible men, "What we call matter or nature has no real being to God"! (p. 419). What He created and made does not exist!! The philosophy that denied the existence of matter was tame in its absurdity compared with this; for it still held to "a permanent possibility of sensation," as John Stuart Mill put it.

HIS VIEW OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD EXCLUDES CHRIST'S.

Similarly his conception of the Fatherhood of God, which is a natural outcome of the other, and which he makes the root, starting-point, and the formative and normative idea of his theology, is opposed to Scripture generally, and comes into the sharpest conflict with the teaching of Christ. His idea of the Divine Fatherhood is that of God's universal Fatherhood, by creation, of all creatures; and that this was "necessary";—consequently that all men, yea, all moral creatures, men and devils, are by nature, and by the necessities of the Divine nature, sons of God, no matter how they may fall or sin, and must for ever remain sons, for "relation stands," as Milton puts it. "The essential love out of which creation issued determined the standing of the created before the Creator, and the relation is filial" (p. 445). "If the motives and ends of God in creation were paternal, then man's filial relation follows, and it stands, however unworthy a son he may prove himself to be" (p. 446). "Sonship is of the essence of humanity" (p. 369). He finds great fault with Athanasius (p. 392) for not affirming that all men are by nature and by creation sons of God,—Athanasius, like Christ and all Scripture, making the real sonship by grace, the new birth, and adoption. But Athanasius was too good a theologian, and too clear a thinker, and too reverent a student of Scripture and of the teaching of Christ, to imagine such a confused fiction, or to override Christ's teaching and all Revelation by a false philosophy. It is scarcely necessary to show how contrary this is to the teaching of Scripture and of Christ. Speaking to the religious leaders of the time, He said, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye will do" (John 8⁴⁴). "If God were your Father, ye would love Me" (John 8⁴²). "Ye

are not of My sheep, as I said unto you" (John 10²⁶). So 1 John 3⁸, "He that committeth sin is of the devil"—having a sinful parentage, in contrast with those who had a Divine parentage. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (1 John 3¹⁰). And so Christ again says, "The tares are the children of the wicked one" (Matt. 13³⁸). "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matt. 23³³ 3⁷, John 3³⁶).¹

Consistently with this doctrine of the natural sonship of God of all men, he has no doctrine of regeneration or being "born again," "born of God," so prominent in the teaching of Christ and His apostles (John 1^{12, 13} 3¹⁻⁷, Tit. 3⁵). Nor is there from the nature of the case any room for a new birth or adoption into the Divine family by grace, because all men are the children of God by nature in the first birth; so that there is no necessity or possibility of a second birth, or "being born again." Yet Christ taught this with absolute repeated emphasis, climaxed with, "Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again" (John 3⁷). Yet this was said to a man of good moral character, —a sincere Pharisee, of high religious profession, blameless, yea noble, life, and large Biblical knowledge,— "a teacher in Israel" in deep soul concern. If all men are by nature the children of God, then obviously all the teaching of Christ and His apostles about the necessity of being "born again" in order to enter into or to see the kingdom of God, the need of repentance in order to eternal life, and the indispensableness of faith in order to be saved, are imaginations; and yet there are no facts in history or science better established than the new birth, conversion, salvation by faith, adoption by grace into God's family of those who were before children of wrath (John 3³⁶, Eph. 2³), as attested by Christian experience in all ages.

IT DEPRIVES BELIEVERS OF THEIR PRECIOUS SONSHIP IN CHRIST,
AND DELUDES UNBELIEVERS WITH A SONSHIP IN COMMON
WITH DEVILS.

He seems not to have grasped the radical distinction between an actual and a potential or an ideal sonship—of a relation by nature to God, in virtue of creation by God, in likeness to God,

¹ Dr. Candlish on 1 John.

and providential care of God, which had "the promise and potency" (using the language of science as to life), of real and everlasting sonship of God, by being "born again" of God, and consequent union with Christ by faith (John 1^{12, 13}) and adoption in Him into the sonship of believers. A sonship this which is not that shared with debauchees and devils, which we care not to have, and which is consistent with eternal damnation; but a sonship that makes us, in veritable spiritual reality, living, blessed children of God, through a new birth by the Holy Ghost and union to Christ by a living faith, and adoption into the Divine family by free grace. A sonship that is Divine in its origin, spiritual in its nature, saving in its effects, and everlasting in its duration. A sonship in union with Christ the same in its nature and character, duration and glory, as the sonship of the Eternal Son,—His, however, being necessary and eternal, ours being of grace in time, by regeneration, adoption, and union with Him by faith. A sonship that enables us as believers with John to say, "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is"; and which enables us to look forward to, and long for, the manifestation of the sons of God, when we shall be with Him where He is, and behold His glory, and share it with Him, as we sit with Him on His throne, share with Him in His and our Father's love, and reign with Him for ever and ever (John 17, 1 John 3¹, Rev. 1. 7. 22).

All this glorious sonship of believers in Christ, the peculiar privilege only of believers, which forms such a vital part of the finest and divinest N.T. Revelation, and of the teaching of Christ, and is gloriously set forth like a new revelation in the writings of Dr. Candlish,¹ seems a *terra incognita* to those who dwell so largely and so vaguely on what is called the universal Fatherhood of God. But the apostles, like Christ, are full of it: and it is the distinctively new revelation of the New Testament on the subject. The other general fatherhood by creation, of which they make so much, is not, as they imagine and proclaim, a doctrine distinctive of the N.T., or the revelation of Christ, as they teach, for it is found in heathen religions and poetry—the Greeks and Romans even sang of Zeus and Jupiter as "father of

¹ See *The Fatherhood of God, The Sonship of Believers*, and his unique 1 John, which many have felt to be like a new revelation to them.

gods and men." They would thus deprive the regenerate and the believing of their real sonship in Christ by a new birth, adoption by grace, and personal faith uniting us to Christ—the same in origin, nature, duration, and glory as Jesus' Sonship; and they would delude the unconverted and unbelieving to their perdition with the idea of a sonship without a new birth, adoption, or faith,—without which Christ said no man could enter the kingdom of God or be saved (John 3⁷),—a sonship by creation common with devils and all creatures, and consistent with destruction. As Sir William Hamilton would say in philosophy, so here, the more the extension, the less the intension; the wider its scope, the less its value.

FREE AND SOVEREIGN GRACE PRECLUDED OR EVACUATED.

As with the true character and the real fatherhood of God, so with the free and sovereign grace of God, it is disowned or misrepresented. He urges "the necessary grace of all God's acts." Hence "the salvation of the sinner is a moral necessity of God" (p. 472). "The Creator had no choice but to become a Saviour when sin entered" (pp. 318, 476). Of this let it suffice here to say. *First*, that free grace, properly so called, is excluded; freedom and necessity, grace and obligation are mutually exclusive. *Second*, that, on these principles, it plainly becomes the duty of the Creator to save all creatures without exception, men and devils. But we have never yet heard that God has moved to save devils—the reverse is clearly implied or taught by Christ and His apostles (Matt. 25, Rev. 20, Jude⁶). And he would be a bold man, indeed, who would presume to say that all fallen beings will and must be saved, in face of the awful teaching to the contrary of both the disciples, and supremely of their Master. Further, "Through Adam sin came, through Christ righteousness. If either was to be, both must be" (p. 461). Here, again, grace becomes no more grace, and the salvation in Christ is not of God's free grace but of Divine obligation! What a direct reversal of free and sovereign grace, which constitutes such a large and fundamental part of God's Word, specially of the teaching of Christ and Paul. Besides, it is an explicit contradiction of the very passage (Rom. 5¹²⁻²¹) drawing the parallel between Adam and Christ, in which the free gift or

the gift by grace is stressed in every corresponding part of the advancing parallel, sometimes twice, seven times in all. Here, too, it is said in contradiction of the express words and the essential necessity of the parallel:—We get “death” through Adam, but “not guilt” (p. 460). Yet how we should get death, “the wages of sin,” without guilt, is never faced or explained. Further, were this true, the parallel requires we should receive no righteousness or merit of Christ imputed to us! Besides, the law of heredity in nature illustrates the principle, as also all life. We also inherit a sinful nature—the penalty of original sin. And it is the principle of the second commandment, “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children.” So that this view is contrary to Scripture, history, science, fact. Again, “if God did act, the way He took was the only way possible to Him” (p. 446). What is man that he should thus presume to limit the Most High, or pretend to know the possibilities of the Infinite?

THE SON, CHRIST. A KENOSIS THAT PRACTICALLY EVACUATES
HIS DIVINITY.

When he gives his improved interpretation of the Person of Christ, we get a Kenosis that practically evacuates His Divinity, and nullifies it in His personal life and relations, limits it to His official work, and excludes it from the greater part of His life. He so presses His “normal” humanity as to virtually deprive Him of His Divinity and its attributes in His life-work,—not merely in His self-imposed limitations of their exercise, but in their possession, he so represents and contrasts the human and the Divine, the natural and the supernatural, in the God-man, and so contrasts and separates the personal life and the official work of Christ as to give unreality to both, and also to the Incarnation, and to imply a duality of persons in Christ. Not merely two natures, two knowledges, or even two wills; but what virtually means two persons, two lives, and two beings, having practically separate existences;—instead of the one unique Divine-human personality, living the one unique Divine-human life,—Revelation’s great mystery of godliness—“God manifest in the flesh.” Into this profound mystery, the infinite depths of which angels desire to look into, both Lutheran and Anglican Kenotics have let down their little lines. I will not say to no

purpose, or without effect, for they have served to fix thought on the veritable brotherhood of Christ; but they have certainly tended to give vagueness if not vacuity to His Godhood, and unreality or nebulosity to the Incarnation.

As Dr. A. B. Bruce well says in his valuable work, *The Humiliation of Christ*, we shall be concerned chiefly to exercise our faculties in preventing these dubious speculations from depriving us of either His real humanity or true Divinity, or lessening our sense of the reality of the Incarnation. Dr. Fairbairn cannot be said to have made the great mystery less mysterious, or the confusion caused by Kenotic speculations less confounded by what Canon Gore rightly calls his own theory of Kenosis; and he has certainly in his attempted philosophy of the Incarnation made some astounding statements, which dissolve it in nebulous unreality, and divide His life and nature into such artificial parts and functions by this improved interpretation, as largely to rob us of the real Son of Man, and the true Son of God of the Gospels. It shows anew the necessity of refusing to go a hair's-breadth beyond the facts and statements of Scripture on this deep mystery, if our Divine-human Saviour, "of two distinct natures and one person for ever," is not to be improved away by their philosophies.

THE HOLY GHOST HAS A SMALL PLACE IN THIS THEOLOGY.

The Holy Ghost has little place in the new theology; and His whole work in connection with the creation, the incarnation, the personal development and the official work of Christ from the cradle to the Cross, where, "He through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God"; the salvation of man—in conviction and conversion, vivification and regeneration, faith and union to Christ, sonship and sanctification; Divine fellowship and filial service (all of which are expressly ascribed by Christ and His apostles to the Holy Ghost) is mostly "missed," and often implicitly precluded. His work in the inspiration of the apostles and all the "holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"—which, by their speaking and writing "as the Spirit gave them utterance," secured that all Scripture was God-breathed, and God's Word—is, as we have seen, largely ignored or practically denied; though the whole of this is writ large on the

face of Scripture, and occupies such a great place in the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and in the history of the Church.

II. ANTHROPOLOGY. MAN. A MOST MEAGRE DOCTRINE OF MAN, AND A CONTRAST TO CHRIST'S.

The anthropology is most meagre and unsatisfactory. There is no Fall; and, therefore, no proper ground for Redemption. No guilt from Adam to his race; therefore, no merit from Christ, though the parallel requires both (Rom. 5¹²⁻²¹). No corruption of man's whole nature; and, therefore, no necessity for a new birth, a truth so strongly urged by Christ. No condemnation by a righteous judge for unbelief, or transgression of a righteous law; and, therefore, no justification by faith by a righteous God, on the ground of Christ's propitiation and obedience unto death, by His righteousness being imputed unto us. No wrath for sinners to escape, since all are under God's love only; therefore, no need to flee to the refuge in the Rock of Ages cleft for us,—though Christ and all Scripture proclaim the reverse. No spiritual inability; and, therefore, no need for passing from death unto life by spiritual quickening or Divine empowerment,—though this bulks largely in the Bible and Christ's teaching. No need for adoption into the family of God by faith and a new birth; for all men are by nature children of God, and "relation stands, however unworthy a son he may prove himself to be." Yet every one of these disowned and ignored truths is taught in the most explicit manner in the Word of God, and most emphatically of all by Christ.

III. THE SOTERIOLOGY IS VERY DEFECTIVE, AND HAS SERIOUS ERROR. THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE HAVE LITTLE PLACE.

As already largely indicated in other connections, the Soteriology is far from satisfactory. It is a grievous "falling of " from, and in antithesis to, the teaching of Christ,—the reverse of a better interpretation of His mind than the disciples give. As shown, the doctrines of grace as a whole have a small place in this restatement of theology; though they have such a large and vital place in the teaching of Christ and His apostles, and are the truths in which as Christians we live, and move, and have our being. Free and sovereign grace is virtually excluded by "the Creator having

no choice but to become a Saviour." Election to salvation of God's free grace, as taught so strongly by Christ and His apostles, is precluded or explained away. Effectual calling, the cardinal work of God's Spirit in man's salvation, in which the teaching of Christ and His apostles is so steeped, is painfully wanting. Passing from death unto life by the quickening and renewing of the Holy Ghost, making us "new creatures in Christ," and uniting us to Him by faith (the gift of God (Eph. 2⁸)) and regeneration (John 1^{12, 13}), making us "partakers of the Divine nature," and of His life and fulness,—all this is sadly lacking, though forming such a vital part of the gospel, as taught by Christ and His apostles. Justification by faith, as shown, "is more Paul's than Christ's"! "which may be true as a deduction of the disciple but not as a principle enunciated by the Master"! though a chief doctrine of His and His apostles' teaching, essential to salvation. Sanctification by faith, growth in grace, the perseverance of the saints, are all ignored or unknown in the new theology, though taught by Christ, and precious in the experience of His people. The sonship of believers in Christ, through union to Him by regeneration and faith, is precluded by the theory of God's universal and necessary Fatherhood of all His intelligent creatures,—making Him equally the Father of men, angels, and devils, and these all equally sons of God by nature;—a Fatherhood that is a fable, a sonship that is a farce, and at an infinite distance from the Fatherhood of God and sonship of believers in Christ, with all the infinitudes of grace and glory thereof, as taught by Him and known by them. He says, "It is the emptiest nominalism to speak of the adoption of a man who was never a Son" (p. 446). We answer, it is the sheerest nonsense to speak of the adoption of a man who is your son; for, as Milton says, "relation stands,"—as Dr. Fairbairn says, "Man's filial relation follows" from "the ends of God in creation, and it stands, however unworthy a son he may prove himself to be" (p. 446).

THE TEACHING ON THE ATONEMENT IS GRAVELY WRONG. NO ATONEMENT AS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURE AND TAUGHT BY CHRIST.

But it is in his teaching on the atonement—the redemptive work of Christ, the basis, root, and core of our salvation—

that this soteriology most fatally fails. There is really no atonement at all in the Bible sense in this new theology, although it is the very heart blood of our redemption, and the burden of the Bible and the Gospel. The vicarious sacrifice of Christ is most carefully and studiously precluded throughout. The soul and substance are wholly excluded of what Christ and the inspired writers meant by the great crucial words and thoughts;—Redemption, God in love sending Him to be the propitiation for our sins; Atonement, by the substitution of Christ for us; Expiation of our sins, by the blood of Christ; Reconciliation to God, by the death of His Son; Sacrifice of Himself, to take away our sin; Ransom, by giving His life for us: as well as the essence of what is expressed in the great classical phrases and passages about Christ “suffering for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”; “bearing our sins in His own body on the tree”; “redeeming us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us”; God “making Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him”; “the Lord laying on Him the iniquity of us all,” and “making His soul an offering for sin”; His “offering Himself up as a sacrifice without spot unto God”; appearing as “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world”; “giving His life a ransom for many”; “to take away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”; and the profound words by which He instituted the Lord’s Supper, “This is My body, broken for you. This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,” for “without shedding of blood is no remission.” Let the following suffice to indicate his view: “The Atonement works in the universe as the manifest and embodied judgment of God against sin, but of this judgment as chastening and regenerating rather than judicial and penal” (p. 482). “The Atonement has satisfied the righteousness of God by vanquishing sin in the sinner, and vindicating the authority of the eternal will” (p. 486), not by punishing our sin in Him who was made sin for us.

A TONIC NOT AN ATONEMENT: A MEDICINE NOT A
REDEMPTION.

"The ends of God in the atonement are those of the regal paternity" (p. 487); that is, it is the act of a loving Father, not of a righteous judge;—not the punishment of sin in the substitute of sinners, by the laying our iniquity on Christ and punishing Him for us; so that His sufferings are a propitiation for our sins;—not penal suffering, properly so called, of Christ in our room and stead as "the just for the unjust," but paternal correction, reformation, and discipline of men. Hence "the atonement is designed to produce in man all the effects of corrective and remedial sufferings, to do the work of restorative and reformatory penalties" (p. 482). But how can that satisfy the righteousness of God or vanquish sin in the sinner, unless Christ's sufferings are the punishment of our sin in the Substitute of sinners? As usual in such theories, the words "penal" and "substitutionary" are used, but in an entirely different sense from the Bible revelations, the distinctive and essential ideas of these words being eliminated. Every idea of substitution, or punishment, or propitiation, or reconciliation of God and sinners by the vicarious suffering of Christ is studiously shut out. It is only chastisement, correction, and reformation of us, by our thought about His sufferings, and by the supposed moral effects on our minds of the sufferings of Christ, giving to the sinner the sense of the evil of sin. But these moral effects cannot be produced, as we shall see, on this theory of Christ's sufferings, but only on the Bible view that Christ's suffering was a vicarious sacrifice of Himself, bearing, as our substitute, the righteous punishment due to us for sin, inflicted on Him by a righteous and sin-avenging God; and thereby making real propitiation for our sins, actually expiating our guilt, and reconciling God and sinners, on the ground of a real, righteous, and complete atonement, by the grace of God, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

And when it is said, God "made Him," in this sense, "to be sin for us," though He "knew no sin," it was not, as Dr. Fairbairn says, that thereby God has made us to know sin (though that will follow if it is, and we regard it as, a real propitiation by His vicarious sacrifice for our sins, but not otherwise), but as Paul says,

"that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him";—that is, the purpose and the effect of Christ's being made sin for us are, that, on account of what He suffered in our stead when "He was made sin for us" (the strongest way possible of expressing this truth),—"we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"; that is, legally righteous before God in Christ—justified in His righteousness. In short, the Bible view of the Atonement—the view of it given by Christ and His apostles, and pervading all Scripture (for their view is absolutely one on this cardinal revelation)—is essentially different in kind from the other view—not only differs *toto cælo*, but is radically antagonistic to it. The one is an *objective* atonement, made by the vicarious sufferings of Christ for us, in which the Lord laid on Him our sin, and He made propitiation for it by bearing its full righteous punishment, and reconciling us to God. The other is a *subjective* atonement, in an impression supposed to be made upon our own minds by the spectacle of the sufferings of Christ. The one is a Divine objective fact, reconciling God and sinners by Christ's propitiatory vicarious sufferings. The other is a human subjective feeling, giving us an impression of the evil of sin. It is indeed a medicine for us, not a redemption by Christ of us,—merely a moral tonic, not a Divine atonement. Appropriately, this improved restatement of the Atonement is closed by this wild statement, "The work of Christ has modified for the better the state *even of the lost*" (p. 487). If Christ and Scripture teach anything, it is that His work when rejected increases the guilt and deepens the doom of the Christ-rejectors (John 3¹⁹ 5²², Matt. 11²⁰⁻²⁴).

THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE IS PRECLUDED, AND THE OLD EXPLODED GOVERNMENTAL THEORY RESTATED.

What we get, then, in this restatement is in substance, though in varied form, the old shallow and ten thousand times refuted Governmental theory of the Atonement, which evaporates its essence, cuts out its very heart, and makes the sacrifice of the Cross a mere spectacular display, to make an impression on men's minds, in the supposed interests of moral government.¹ But not

¹ But here, too, he makes a notoriously untrue statement: "We have argued that a sense of sin is a creation of Christianity" (p. 48). Fancy *that*

a vicarious sacrifice to atone for sin,—in which the Lord laid on Him our iniquity ; nor a propitiation through the shedding of Christ's blood, by which God and sinners are reconciled ; nor the penal suffering of the sinner's Substitute bearing the righteous punishment of our sins in His own body on the tree ;—not, in short, “a sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice and to reconcile us unto God.” All these cardinal and crucial truths and representations, which form the burden of the Bible and the core of the revelation of Divine grace in Christ, are expressly, and by necessity of their first principles, precluded and scrupulously excluded. Therefore, the sufferings of Christ,—the most real and deepest thing in the universe,—if they were not vicarious, nor the righteous punishment of sin, nor required by Divine justice, nor necessary to reconcile God and sinners, but a mere spectacular display, are dissolved in infinite unreality, and become, involve, indeed, Divine deception. Since God was the chief inflictor of these untold, but, on this view, non-obligatory sufferings of the sinless One, it amounts to a charge against the God of righteousness and love of perpetrating the most awful injury, by laying such unspeakable sufferings on Christ, when not as the punishment of our or of any sins, and of inflicting this supreme moral wrong upon His beloved Son !

NO REAL ATONEMENT FOR SIN, NOR PROPER MORAL
IMPRESSION ON MAN.

And so far from the Cross making on this theory an impression favourable to righteousness on moral beings, it could only shock the moral sense of every righteous being, and set a supreme example of unrighteousness and wrong before the moral universe by its Author. No doubt the Cross was meant and fitted to make a profound moral impression “making for righteousness” upon the minds of all moral beings. Its chief end was to reveal the love of God. Its specific and immediate object was to make atonement for sin by the vicarious suffering of the Just One for the unjust, and thus to make reconciliation between God and men. Its moral design manward was to in the light of the penitential Psalms—the 6th and 53rd of Isaiah ! The Prayers of Moses, David, Josiah, Daniel, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the whole O.T.

reveal the righteousness and love of God in order to show men the evil of sin, and to wean them from it.

But it could not do any of these things on the principles of this theory. It could, and does do all of them on the evangelical or Bible view of Christ's sufferings. It could not make atonement or propitiation except by the Saviour taking the place of the sinner, and suffering as "the Just for the unjust" the punishment due to us for sin, and thus satisfying the righteous demands of law and justice. It could not make an impression favourable to righteousness unless it were itself a manifestation of righteousness; instead of being, as this theory would make it, a supreme example of unrighteousness, if the innocent One suffered, at the hands of God, what was not the punishment of our or of anyone's sin.

THE CROSS MAKES ITS PROPER MORAL IMPRESSION ONLY WHEN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS ARE VIEWED AS VICARIOUS.

But if the suffering of Christ, as Jesus and all Scripture teach, was a vicarious sacrifice, in which He bore the punishment of our sin—then, verily, sin was righteously and fully atoned for; and God can be both "just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Then, too, the Cross is a most impressive revelation of the righteousness of God, and of the awful evil of sin, when a God of justice and of judgment rises in His wrath to deal with it. For it shows that sin was such a terrible evil that nothing less than the death of God's Son, ay, even the accursed death of the Cross, was sufficient to atone for it. It gives an alarming revelation of the righteousness of God, that when our sin was laid on Him, the very least punishment a God of righteousness and of love could inflict, even when on the head of His beloved Son, was the agony of the garden and the anguish of the Cross, with the infinitudes of wrath and sorrow there. It declares with an alarming emphasis what a fearful thing it is to fall with sin into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire. And it also gives an amazing manifestation of the love of God in Christ, that when there was no other way in which a righteous God could save a guilty and rebellious race, except by the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, "God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up

for us all" (Rom. 8³²). *Herein is love*, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and *sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins*" (1 John 4¹⁰). When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Rom. 5¹⁰). Being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him (Rom. 5^{8,9}). It is because this death on the Cross was a propitiation for our sins, that it manifests in a unique way the love of God to us. Hence it is because God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to make this propitiation, that the Cross becomes the supreme revelation and symbol of the love of God to sinful men.

Had it been morally possible for God to save men without the vicarious sacrifice of His beloved Son,—which it was not unless sin was to pass unpunished under the moral government of a righteous God, we should not have had such a wondrous manifestation of God's love; and it is just because His suffering unto the accursed death of the Cross was a moral necessity of our redemption, laid upon God by the very perfection of His nature and the requirements of righteousness, that the Cross becomes the supreme manifestation and symbol of Divine love, and is radiant with the glory of God. Ay! it is this, too, that best explains and transfuses with glory the great mystery of suffering, against which men so bitterly complain and rebel. For it shows that God Himself is a fellow-sufferer with us in the great struggle that leads through suffering to glory; and that He takes upon Himself, in its most extreme forms, everything in suffering that tempts men to deny or question God's love, and uses it as the supreme means of manifesting His wondrous love in a way that, without this awful suffering, could have never been so amazingly revealed to us. And thus the propitiatory character of the sufferings of the Cross is not only the necessary means of our redemption, but also casts a flood of light and comfort on the great mystery of suffering, and wraps the Cross in a blaze of glory that irradiates the universe, and shines across the dark, sad sea of suffering with a glory all its own, and draws men and angels to God as nothing else approaches to, and leads them to ponder it in love responsive, and to see through the light of the redeeming Cross, as nowhere else, the length and the breadth, and the height and the depth of the love of God which passeth knowledge.

Thus the Atonement by the vicarious sacrifice of Christ was the revelation of the Law and the Prophets, the Gospels and the Epistles, and the inspired teachers of the O.T. and the New. It is the keystone of our redemption, and the only and all-sufficient ground of our salvation. It is the foundation of all our peace and hope as sinners before a righteous God. It is the only thing that can satisfy the conscience of an awakened soul, or meet the demands of Divine justice, or make it possible for a holy God to be at once a just God and a Saviour—"That He might be just, and the justifier of Him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3²⁶). It has thrilled the hearts and saved the souls of millions in every age, and has inspired our deepest and grandest hymnology in all lands and times. It has brought ease to the alarmed conscience, rest to the sin-laden heart, peace to the dying sinner on the verge of eternity, and nerved the martyr midst the flames.

" It takes its terror from the grave
And gilds the bed of death with light ;
The balm of life, the cure of woe,
The measure and the pledge of love,
The sinner's refuge here below,
The angel's theme in heaven above."

It awakes the songs and evokes the jubilations of heaven as the multitude whom no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, join to the praise of "Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood," in the high song which eternity will never let fall, as with a voice loud as of numbers without number, and sweet as blessed voices uttering joy, they raise and swell the grand hallelujah of the universe, when heaven rings jubilee, and glad hosannas fill the everlasting regions as with one voice they cry : "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Rev. 5¹²).

IV. THE ESCHATOLOGY. THE FUTURE LIFE. THE NEW THEOLOGY IS VERY MEAGRE HERE, AND VITIATED BY THE FALSE ROOT-CONCEPTION OF GOD.

The Eschatology of this improved restatement of theology, which presumed to give a better interpretation of the mind of Christ than His apostles, is so meagre, one-sided, and so

dominated and vitiated by one false and defective root-idea of the fatherhood of God, that it may be indicated and disposed of very briefly ; though it holds such a large, impressive, and significant place in the crowning teaching of Christ and His apostles ; —shining out in vivid and awful grandeur in the firmament of Revelation on the sublime and solemnising background of eternity and infinitude. The reference to it here will be useful mainly as revealing, in contrast with the teaching of Christ and His apostles, the defectiveness and the falseness of the prime conception and root principle of the new nebulous theology of “regal paternity.”

There is nothing of the resurrection of the dead, for the false root-conception of the theory would preclude all such ideas as are expressed in the solemn and majestic words of our Lord, John 5^{28, 29} : “The hour cometh in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” ; because such a dreadful idea as this last, though in Christ’s very words, is quite out of keeping with their idea of God’s Fatherhood.

There is a distinct and implicit denial of the solemn N.T. Revelation that destiny is fixed at death, because “the Father is one who loved too deeply to surrender the lost” (p. 457). Yet Christ expressly says of the rich man who, on his death, “in hell lifted up his eyes, being in torment,” “Between us and you there is a *great gulf fixed*” (Luke 16). In closing Revelation, too, He deduces the doctrine of the fixity of destiny through the permanency of character : “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still ; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still” (Rev. 22¹⁰). See much more to the like effect below.

NO PLACE FOR THE SECOND ADVENT, THE JUDGMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST, THE “DAY OF VENGEANCE” OR “WRATH OF THE LAMB.”

There is nothing of the Second Coming, or of the Lord Jesus being “revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel” (2 Thess. 1^{7, 8}). Neither is there anything of judgment to come, or the great white throne, or the judgment-seat of

Christ, or of Christ being Judge and "rewarding every one according to his works"; or of "the wrath of the Lamb" on "that great day," when He shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"; and, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"; or of declaring the final destinies: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25); or of God destroying soul and body in hell (Matt. 12), "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched" (Mark 9). For all such representations are a part of that judicial "forensic theology" which is rejected, and is abhorrent to their *quasi* "paternal" view of God, supposed to be derived from this better interpretation of the consciousness of Christ. Yet these representations are the *very words of Christ*.

WILD CONCLUSIONS FROM WRONG ROOT-IDEA OF GOD.

Following out the same vitiating root principle we find, with much to the same effect, such wild statements as are referred to before, which sufficiently indicate the extravagant character and radical erroneousness of this theology—about there being "no more of the love of God in heaven than in hell"; that God could not hate even the devil; else "He would be less than God"; and "the promise that the Good is ever bound to make to Himself never to surrender to evil those who are held by evil" (pp. 424, 425). Wild, delusive statements these, no doubt, carrying in their very face their own refutation, putting the appropriate fool's cap on this fanciful and fabulous conception of God. But they are the closing and consistent conclusions of the false root principle that vitiates the whole "sugar theology"—the natural and necessary outcome of the radically wrong conceptions of the Divine Fatherhood, which though professing to be derived from Christ, and avowedly deduced from Him, and presuming to be a better interpretation of His mind than the Apostolic, directly contradict, and thoroughly reverse the most solemn and decisive utterances and revelations of our Lord upon these subjects; and are utterly opposed to, and entirely preclude and disown, the whole Eschatology of Christ, and of all God's Word.

THE IMPROVED RESTATEMENT OF CHRIST'S MIND IS CONTRADICTED BY SCRIPTURE, FACT, HISTORY, CONSCIENCE, REASON, EXPERIENCE, AND CHRIST'S TEACHING.

This theology has thus utterly broken down and shown itself to be a "failure" in every distinctive leading division, especially in the last. It has not only "missed" much of the teaching of Christ, and "failed to see" or interpret the chief revelations of His mind; but it has completely reversed His teaching on these essential and fundamental truths, and in the leading and crucial things is diametrically opposed to it. It is indeed "another Gospel," which, indeed, is not another, but a perversion of the Gospel of the grace of God; and is, in fact, no Divine Gospel at all, but a human delusion—a fanciful religious speculation, which is contrary to the Revelation of God in Scripture, contradicts the most solemn and decisive teaching of Christ, is proved untrue in Christian experience, and found quite unsatisfying to consciences thoroughly awakened to the alarming criminality of their guilt, and the awfulness of the wrath of God against men for sin, as revealed supremely in the agony of the bloody sweat in the garden, and the anguish of the broken heart on the Cross—the hell of a dying and atoning Redeemer.

This strong delusion might ere now have been dispelled by the stern facts of life, the burnings of conscience, and the anguish of remorse; which so relentlessly, because so righteously, pursue, as avenging furies, the workers of iniquity with something of the pains of hell, and give alarming premonitions of "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched." Also by the awful facts of history, red with the wrath of a righteous and sin-avenging God, as in the footsteps of judgment He comes forth against the obdurately wicked; as revealed by the fierce and lurid light of God's burning holiness, in such dread and destructive events as the terrible judgment of the Deluge, because the wickedness of man had become so great upon the earth that even a merciful and long-suffering God could do nothing with men but drown them in perdition. In the destruction by fire of Sodom and Gomorrah as, in answer to the cry of their sin, the kindling wrath of a righteous God sent them up in one wild blaze to an angry heaven, and rolled the waters of the Dead Sea over them as a dread and everlasting monument of God's displeasure with

the workers of iniquity. In the destruction, for their cruelty and obduracy, of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, when Pharaoh and his chariots sank like lead in the mighty waters, and their carcasses were rolled up by the avenging waves like seaweed on the strand. In the wicked rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against the Lord in His anointed high priest, typical of the priesthood of our Redeemer, when the earth opened her mouth and they went down alive into the pit. In the fearful destruction of the much-privileged but long-impenitent Jerusalem by the Romans, in answer to the criminal cry, "His blood be on us and on our children"; when in the righteous judgment of a long-suffering God the fierce vengeance of Roman soldiers, infuriated by their obstinacy, crucified, butchered, or burned a million Jews within its walls; and the blaze of the burning city was so terrific as to chase darkness from the midnight sky through the long night, and make the surrounding hills like day, as the nationality of Israel was extinguished in ashes and drowned in blood,—all giving a never-to-be-forgotten revelation of the terrible judgment that in the righteousness of a long-suffering God at length overtakes the despiser of the day of grace, and the awful doom that overwhelms at last the Christ-rejector.

And yet in the face of these and countless such dreadful facts, writ large in letters of blood on the arena of human life and history—every one of which was, and was declared to be not reformatory, or remedial, as to those who experienced them, but punitive and destructive,—as even fools might see,—men go on dreaming, as if the new theology had removed out of the universe a God of justice, or of judgment to whom vengeance belongeth; and as if there were no moral government of righteousness or of wrath either in earth or hell. A delusion from which, if the Eschatology of Christ and of all Scripture is true, a rude awaking cometh, when "the great day of the wrath of the Lamb has come" (Rev. 6), and "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1⁷⁻⁹); and He that sitteth upon the great white throne shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil

and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25).

THIS RESTATEMENT IS NOT AN IMPROVED, BUT A DEGENERATE THEOLOGY, THE DEDUCTIONS OF A FALSE PHILOSOPHY CONTRARY TO SCRIPTURE AND THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

This would-be improved restatement of theology has thus been weighed alongside of the teaching of Christ, and found wanting. And as Dr. Fairbairn says of Baur and the Tübingen school, so we must say of this: "It failed because it was a philosophy brought to bear on a religion." In this case it is patently not an inductive, but a deductive philosophy, which takes us back to the perversive method of the Middle Ages; instead of the great inductive method, which Bacon taught, and Newton practised, and which has yielded all the magnificent results of modern science. Starting from a false or defective conception of the fatherhood of God, he *deduces* first a God from whom justice and wrath against evil workers are eliminated; who only loves, in whom "righteousness is in a sense the executrix of love" (p. 443), and that only; and who is shorn of free and sovereign grace. From this is *deduced* the creation of moral beings, to all of whom—men, angels, or devils—God of necessity stands in the relationship of Father; and each of whom is by creation and of necessity a son of God; and, therefore, cannot become a son of God by grace, through regeneration, adoption, and union to Christ by faith. Believers are thus robbed of their sonship in Christ, and unbelievers are deluded to their perdition. From this is *deduced* a Divine government, from which Divine justice is excluded, in which only love reigns; and under which no judicial punishment, strictly so called, is ever inflicted on the sinner or his Saviour, but only corrective and reformatory discipline. From this is *deduced* an Atonement which is no atonement; in which there is no vicarious sacrifice of Christ for us, but only disciplinary impressions made upon our own minds by Christ's sufferings, which were not the punishment of our or any sins.

From this it is *deduced* that there is no imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, and no justification of us by faith, on account of His merits; even as there was no imputation of guilt from

Adam, though we do receive death—the wages of sin—from him,—the punishment without the guilt! From this view of God's character is finally *deduced* that God's love to the saved is only a different kind of love from His love to the damned; that “quantitatively,” though not “qualitatively,” “there is as much love in hell as in heaven,” and that God does not and “cannot surrender” the obdurately wicked to evil, or “hate even the devil,” and be God! To have consistently completed the deductions on that conception, it should have also been said that there is no hell, no devils, and no evil; for surely such things were not possible under the reign of a God whose whole attributes and acts were summed up in love, if He really existed, and was the Supreme Being.

But all these untrue and *outrè deductions* simply serve to show the error in the root-idea,—the fallaciousness of the reasoning, and the vitiativeness of the deductive method in the system of theology that could lead to such false and absurd results. Dr. Fairbairn, beginning with a defective and erroneous conception of the character and the fatherhood of God, proceeds in this vitiating process of deduction with a sublime obliviousness of the teaching of Christ and of His apostles on the particular doctrines on which, in his false and fallacious deductions from his wrong root principle, he comes to conclusions directly and glaringly contradictory to the most solemn and decisive teaching of Christ, as given in His own very words.

Instead of inquiring in each case and at every stage, “What saith the Lord,” he proceeds ignoring and contradicting Christ's most explicit and impressive utterances on the subjects, as we have seen; and then gives out these errors, and even absurdities, as a better interpretation of the mind of Christ than His disciples, and an improved restatement of theology! and seems to have credulity enough to imagine that men will believe them, on his *ipse dixit*, in the face of the directly opposite teaching of Christ. The teaching of Principal Fairbairn and of others like him may be right, and the teaching of Jesus Christ and His apostles may be wrong, but they *cannot* both be true; for they directly contradict each other along the whole line and on all the leading truths of Revelation; so that if the one is true, the other *must* be false, and “there's an end on't.”

CHAPTER VII.

III. *THE RITSCHLIANS' AND SIMILAR VIEWS.*

PERHAPS the best—the worst illustration of this perverse practice of placing the teaching of Christ and of His apostles in antithesis and antagonism, and of the absurd presumption of present-day critics affecting to give better interpretations of the mind of Christ than the N.T. writers, is furnished by the Ritschlians and their followers. Ritschl, the founder of the school, was one of the disciples of Baur, the head of the once famous but long ago exploded Tübingen “tendency” school;—which, by an extravagant and perverse criticism, placed the N.T. writers and writings in strongest antagonistic tendency, to the apparent discrediting of the inspired N.T. writings. Ritschl left it early, declaring such criticism to be unworthy of the name of historical, and set up in a bold and impressive form the school which professes to make the historical Christ the basis and only source of Christian doctrine; and is characterised by an intense aversion to philosophy, or, as it was called, “Metaphysics” in theology. In so doing, it met the historical spirit of the age, which had, through the barrenness and withering effects of the Old Rationalism, come to have a profound distrust of reason in religious speculation. Ritschl was a man of genius and ability, and by this along with his noble character, composed manner, and the boldness and apparent reasonableness of his standpoint and root principles, made a great impression. And, though his mind was in a continual state of flux, which often led him to abandon views he had held, he was, on the whole, as usual, more conservative than many of the school that bears his name, and gave a much greater place than his followers to the teaching of the apostles, specially of Paul.

Ritschlianism is a leading and dominant school of German

theology of widespread influence, with many able and some original minds, such as Ritschl (the founder), Kaftan, Herrmann, Schultz, Harnack, Wendt, Bender. It really originated in a revulsion against the reign of philosophy in religion, which had so long dominated and perverted German theology. Its avowed object is to get rid of the old and unfruitful antagonism between Rationalism and Supernaturalism.¹ It aims at securing an independent sphere for religious consciousness, apart from dependence on philosophy, natural science, or historical criticism. It claims connection with and descent from Kant (hence Neo-Kantian), Schleiermacher, and even Luther. Yet it practically discards Kant's categorical moral imperative. It lacks the religious fervour and far-reaching horizons of Schleiermacher; but while he bases religion on the consciousness of the believing individual, the Ritschlians place it in the consciousness of the primitive spiritual community nearest Jesus, as deposited in the N.T. And while in some things and aspects they may claim kinship with Luther in emphasising the value of Christian experience, yet their system as a whole diverges widely from the evangelical faith which he restored, and is indeed radically different from it in principle, basis, and substance. It is, however, a truly religious movement which has engaged the thought and moulded the teaching of many able and influential men. It has done good service in protesting against the vitiating dominancy of speculative philosophy in Christian theology; in insisting on the religious value of the Christian consciousness and the testimony of believers' experience; in urging the power of spiritual faith in giving victory over the world, and supremacy over the vicissitudes of time; and in rightly placing what is of religious value and moral help—"judgments of worth" (using their terms)—above mere "theoretic knowledge."

The Ritschlians have also rendered some valuable service in restoring the N.T. writings to their proper place in the apostolic age;² in avowedly returning to the historical Christ as the chief

¹ See Lichtenberger's *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*.

² Harnack in his latest work puts them practically in that age—the latest date for any N.T. book being 110, and most much earlier, towards the middle of the first century.

source of religion and the perfect Revelation of God ; in professedly basing their theology on Holy Scripture, especially on the N.T.—the Gospels chiefly ; and in giving Jesus and His teaching a unique place and authority in religion and ethics.

PHILOSOPHY IN THEOLOGY.

But, with all this, Ritschlianism is a radically defective system of theology, which eliminates or ignores the essential and radical truths and facts of the Christian faith, and ultimately subverts it ; and attempts to replace it by “another gospel,” “which is not another,” for it has really no Saviour to meet the needs of guilty men.

With all its protests against philosophy in religion, it is itself a fresh evidence and exemplification of the perverting influence of German philosophy on theology. By philosophic reasoning on its own metaphysical principles, and in its own speculative method, it makes its protest against the reign of philosophy in theology. Through its peculiar metaphysics it settles the basis, principles, and method of its own Scripture criticism and religious system. On the presuppositions of its own philosophy, it proceeds to the examination and interpretation of Holy Writ, and bends it to suit the vague system. By means of its own critical method and its preconceived religious ideas, it forms its so-called Christian theology by selecting certain seemingly assimilable elements of Revelation, which by dexterous manipulation are misused to support its own system, and excludes the chief facts and essential truths of the Christian faith ; so that in reality philosophy and metaphysics of their own dominate and determine the Ritschlians' theology. As Ritschl, in contradiction of the first watchword of his school, truly says, it is “not whether but what philosophy” is to be used in theology ; which as Frank, a critic, justly remarks, draws back all the philosophy into theology. In fact they must philosophise to show that theology should have no philosophy, and to distinguish between theoretic and religious knowledge, and so through all their theorising.

Further, the system is not only rooted in metaphysics and dominated by philosophy, but the metaphysics are bad, and the philosophy is worse. The fundamental principle of the school is

that "theoretic knowledge" and religious thought must be kept sacredly apart as belonging to totally separate spheres. Yet what is their theology but simply their own theoretic knowledge mingled with slight elements of perverted Revelation to give it a Christian flavour? The ethical is also held to be similarly separate from the religious, and to have no connection with it,—Ritschl ironically declaring that the supposed ethical connection between justification and sanctification is "apocryphal"! But this attempted separation of the intellectual, moral, and religious parts of man's complex but united spiritual being is as philosophically false and artificial as it is psychologically impossible and inconceivable. Religion and reason cannot thus be divorced so long as man is man; for they are constituent and complementary elements of our one united interpenetrated nature and personality, which are so united and inter-dependent that the one cannot act without the other sharing with it. The various elements of man's one complex spiritual being are so correlated and mutually dependent, and so thoroughly one indiscerptible whole, that such separation and segmentation are from the nature of the case a patent psychological impossibility, and a simple philosophical absurdity, which no school of philosophy since the dawn of human thought could entertain till the exigencies of Ritschlian theology produced the abortion; and which both reason and Revelation reject as an incredible hypothesis, and repudiate as a palpable violation of the first principles of both. Besides, in seeking to shut out natural science and human history from theology, and to cut off religion from nature and providence, it not only precludes natural theology with all its sure preliminary truths confirmatory of Revelation, and contradicts Scripture, which distinctly recognises its place; but it hands over nature to science, Divine providence to secular history, truth to philosophy, and leaves religion only feeling, imagination, and illusion. And the religious interpretation of history, which is its true philosophy, and was ever a chief function and method of Divine Revelation, is abandoned to the unspiritual. How readily in this way does the religious seem to be the unreal, and the theological the untrue! And how easily, then, can science look on theology with contempt, and unbelief glory over religion with triumph!

THE PROFESSED RETURN TO THE HISTORICAL CHRIST.

Its avowed and vociferated return to the historical Christ as the perfect revelation of God, and the prime source of Christian theology, was right, and good, and greatly needed after the long and barren reign of speculation in religion, and stagnation in dogmatic theology. In this it has struck the true keynote, and emphasised the proper standpoint for Christian theology and religious life; and from this centre and along this line the truly progressive theology and Christian life of the future must advance. But they have not adhered to that position. On the contrary, notwithstanding all their loud insistence on it, and their avowed devotion to it as their chosen basis and distinctive standpoint, they have largely departed from it, and often flagrantly violated it,—as may be seen, among others, from the writings of Wendt, perhaps the best known representative here of the school, and whose views, therefore, we shall chiefly give in our brief summary and criticism.¹ By their preconceived system they exclude much of the chief portions of the history altogether. The whole history of His resurrection and of His appearances after it, with all the teaching and revelations of the risen Lord, are excluded, disowned, and summarily discarded as illusion or metaphysics; although they are the best established facts in the history of the world, and form the chief facts and most potent factors in the history and teaching of our Lord, and in the creation and propagation of the Christian faith. Similarly, on the same false principles, the whole history as to our Lord's birth, with its Divine preparations, as recorded in the Gospels, on to His baptism, is ignored and unhesitatingly dismissed, because not consistent with their preposterous presuppositions, although they are the root facts and Divine origins of Christ's life and revelation of God. The prime and creative facts and factors—His incarnation and resurrection, with their infinite antecedents and consequents—having been thus of necessity precluded by their false postulates and preconceptions, they then so misread and misrepresent the records of His life and teaching during the brief period of His public ministry, and ignore or disown so much of these—selecting only what suits their own theories—that what is presented as the outcome of their improved interpretation of

¹ See Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*.

Jesus is such a travesty of His life, conceptions, and teaching as literature can scarcely parallel of any historical personage; and such a misrepresentation of the consciousness and character, work and words of the historical Christ of the N.T. as is no more like its representation than night is like day, and would, if generally received, wreck Christianity; for the base and crown, the root and fruit, the core and the soul and the life would be taken away from it. By disowning, as metaphysics, through their own false philosophy His pre-existence and incarnation, they cut Christ off from His Divine rootings; and by denying His resurrection and ascension, with all involved therein, they cut off from Him the infinite fruits of His person and work. Consequently, like a man beginning the study of a science in the middle, and stopping short as it nears its results, they misunderstand, mutilate, and misrepresent all that lies between; so that while they hold Jesus to be the one perfect revelation of God, they, by their preconceived ideas and *à priori* principles, preclude or ignore with amazing inconsistency the chief facts and His weightiest teaching by which the revelation is made, in direct subversion of their own avowed position.

HOW THE RITSCHLIANS VIOLATE THIS.

The methods by which, and the principles on which, all this is done are very significant, and in their issues are not only destructive, but self-destructive.

They distinctly deny the root doctrine of the Reformation, that the Bible is the rule of faith,—Wendt saying that the true view, viz. that Jesus' teaching is the perfect revelation of God, has been "cramped" by Protestantism in holding the "normative authority of Holy Scripture for Christian doctrine,"¹ though this, as seen, was Jesus' first and fundamental teaching. They also declare the serious erroneousness and untrustworthiness of Scripture in general, and proceed on this false assumption to assail and destroy it largely at will; though this is directly in the face of Christ's most decisive teaching, invariable practice, and unchanging attitude.

¹ Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*, p. 2.

ALLEGED ANTAGONISM BETWEEN CHRIST'S AND APOSTLES TEACHING.

In full contradiction of His most explicit and emphatic teaching and promise, they assume and emphasise the erroneousness, untrustworthiness, and unauthoritativeness of the inspired writers of the N.T.,—charging them with largely misunderstanding and seriously misrepresenting the teaching of Jesus, and corrupting the Christianity of Christ. Hence Herrmann holds that “what is important is not that we should have the thoughts of the apostles about Christ, but that we should have thoughts of our own.”¹ Harnack imagines that “it was the first step in the down grade of the religion of Jesus when the Church through the apostles was misled by its faith in His resurrection to concentrate its thoughts on the Person of Christ Himself.”² And Wendt dares to upbraid the apostles, even after the descent of the Spirit, for their “stupidity” in misinterpreting and misrepresenting the teaching, claims, and work of Christ, and thereby misleading the Church; and, therefore, roundly declares that the views of the inspired writers of the N.T. are not binding on any man.³ Yet, as seen, Christ promised and sent the Spirit on express purpose to lead them into all truth that they might teach it, and holds their teaching to be His own by this Spirit through them. He expressly declares, “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you”; “He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me”; and “whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom . . . in the day of judgment, than for that city.” They put the teaching of the apostles in antagonism and often in contradiction to the teaching of Christ; though, as shown, there is no foundation for the one, or proof of the other; and both are directly opposed to the teaching, promise, and purpose of Christ.

THE RITSCHLIANS' CAPRICIOUS CRITICISM.

On this false assumption they proceed to examine the Gospel records in order to separate by their critical analysis the words

¹ See Dr. Denney's *Studies in Theology*, p. 224.

² *Ibid.* p. 224, and Harnack's *History of Dogma*.

³ Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*. See also Dr. Denney, p. 224.

of Jesus from the words of the evangelists, so as to eliminate His truth from their erroneousness. And here, if ever, criticism becomes caprice, and constrains contempt. Not even do Dr. Martineau or Matthew Arnold more arbitrarily play fast and loose with Holy Writ, and violate every principle of true scientific criticism, than do the Ritschlians. Nor was ever criticism more oracular, though so variable, diverse, and often contradictory,—for no two of them agree in their results; as Kaftan says truly, “The differences among us are very great.”¹ Yet they are all so sure of their conclusions, though so confictory; and the one thing they are all absolutely certain of is, that they are incomparably better interpreters of the mind of Jesus than the apostles whom He specially inspired on purpose to reveal Him and His mind truly, finally, and authoritatively! But the amazing and amusing thing is that after thus discrediting and abusing the inspired writers and their writings,—the sole sources of all our knowledge of Jesus or His teaching,—they could then rely on them at all; and actually attempt to construct from such misleading materials any statement of the teaching of Jesus. They fitly crown the absurdity by issuing their oracular but contradictory and ever-changing theories of the teaching of Jesus as far superior interpretations of His mind to that given by the Holy Spirit through the apostles, and in their innocence imagine that men of sense will believe them!

THEIR PHILOSOPHY RULES THEIR THEOLOGY, AND THEIR
THEOLOGY DETERMINES THEIR CRITICISM.

As their philosophy rules their theology, so their theology determines their criticism. Frequently their perversions of just Biblical criticism are patently the product of their preconceived theological system. There is no eschatology in Ritschl or his school;—although it holds such a large place and forms such an impressive part of Christ’s sublimest teaching—which shines out with awful grandeur in the firmament of Revelation, and lightens up the deep darkness of futurity with its fierce lightning gleams. All this eschatological teaching of our Lord, which has ever made such a profound impression on the minds of men, and awakened the deepest emotions of the human soul, has been ignored and

¹ Kaftan in *Zeitschrift*, 1896, p. 378. See Dr. Orr, *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 27.

set aside by them avowedly on the ground, as Harnack¹ says, that in this it is impossible to separate the words of Jesus from the words wrongly put into His lips by His superstitious disciples, though there is absolutely no ground for such an idea, and no words of Jesus more surely authenticate themselves than these.² The real reason, however, of this perversion of true criticism is to be found in the radical antagonism of their system to such Divine revelations. In any case their system and method would make our conceptions of the teaching of Jesus vary as the oft-conflicting, ever-changing, and never certain results, as to what are Christ's words, of their capricious criticism, which is always prejudiced by their false philosophy. So that if their metaphysics is bad, and their philosophy worse, their criticism is worse still,—for the longer the evil current runs the worse its effects become.

THEIR EXEGESIS DOMINATED BY THEIR DOGMATICS.

But their exegesis is in many respects worst of all. Wendt ventures, without any proof, to censure the apostles for teaching what the Holy Spirit taught them—that when Christ said to the Jews, “Destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again,” He meant nothing about His own resurrection; but meant that when the Jewish worship was abolished He would set up another and better worship in its stead,³—which is not exegesis but absurdity, excluded by the words, falsified by the facts, and begotten of antipathy to His prediction of the great Divine event on which the whole creation and redemption hang. Blinded by prejudice, he also asserts that our Lord had no reference whatever in the words of the Last Supper to men's redemption by His vicarious death,—although, as shown below, it would be difficult to express in language that cardinal creative truth with more clearness and decision. To that profound and precious fact, with a true, Spirit-given intuition, fully verified in Christian experience, the Church has ever clung with intensest delight; and in it she has gloried with a unique joy voiced in her divinest hymnology, as the very core and essence of her faith, and the very life-blood of our salvation. And the whole Ritschlian

¹ *History of Dogma*, p. 66.

² See Matt. 24. 25. 26, Mark 9, Luke 16.

³ Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*, p. 323.

interpretation of the revelation of grace by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus by the propitiation through faith in His blood, which Jesus stated was the burden, soul, and glory of all Scripture, is such a palpable perversion of the real meaning of the clearest language, and such a patent evacuation of the most decisive teaching of God's Word, especially of Christ's words, as only the most blinding prejudice could produce, and the most perversive antipathy can explain. As Dr. Denney truly says, "There is hardly a word about the death of Christ in the N.T. that would have been written as it stands,—there is hardly a word that does not need to be tortured in defiance of exegesis—to fall into any appearance of consistency with the views of their school."¹ Every principle of true exegesis, and every canon of literary criticism, has to be flagrantly violated to give any semblance of plausibility to the forced interpretations of the N.T. imposed upon it by the false root principles of their system. As Dr. A. B. Davidson has well said of the methods and results of rationalistic critics of the O.T., we are constrained to say of much of the Ritschlian handling of the N.T., in its chief parts and most vital elements "Was ever a literature so treated?"

THE ERRONEOUSNESS OF RITSCHLIANS MOST MANIFEST IN THEIR TREATMENT OF JESUS AND HIS TEACHING.

It is when the Ritschlians treat directly of Jesus and His teaching that the radical erroneousness of their system and the gravity of their departure from the Christian faith fully appear, and most seriously arrest attention. Despite all their avowed honour of Him and of His teaching, they really honour neither it nor Him, but deeply dishonour both. While recognising that He may have for believers "the religious value of God," as Ritschl said, and that He is the one perfect revelation of God, they obviously disown His Deity. How then can He have the religious value of God if He is not God? They distinctly disown His eternal Sonship. They explicitly assert that He had no existence, except perhaps ideal, before His birth on earth. They teach that His life began at the cradle, and His work ended at the Cross. They maintain that there was nothing supernatural about Him or His work. His miracles, on which He laid such

¹ Dr. Denney's *Studies in Theology*, p. 144.

stress, as evidences of His Divine claims, and seals of His mission, they disown or ignore as at best "entirely dubious," and of no importance, as Harnack says,¹ or preclude them by the universal and unbroken reign of natural law, as Ritschl and Wendt. His resurrection from the dead they deny or disown as incapable of proof, or hold it as a matter of indifference, and exclude it from their theology of the historical Christ; although it is the supreme and crowning fact in His history, and the greatest and best established fact in the history of the world; although He repeatedly foretold it, made so much of it in private and public before friends and foes, and ultimately rested the final proof of His whole Divine claims upon it; although Paul through the Spirit staked Christianity upon it; although all the N.T. inspired writers and preachers made it the burden and supreme fact of all their testimony and teaching; and although the Holy Spirit made the preaching of it on the day of Pentecost the means of creating the Christian Church in living visibility; and God the Father sealed the proclamation of it throughout the world as the wisdom and the power of God unto men's salvation, and gave it as His final testimony to mankind of the truth of His Son's Divine claims to be the Son of God, the Redeemer of men, and the Judge of all, "whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17³¹). His appearances and teaching after the resurrection (which He Himself foretold and promised for the comfort of His disciples), which is His highest earthly teaching, and made luminous His previous teaching, and which some of the greatest scholars and profoundest thinkers have found to be His richest and most significant revelations,³ which many others have felt to be His most real and precious manifestations of Himself for the comfort of His people amid life's disappointments and death's desolations,—all these the Ritschlians, with similar audacity and violence to every principle of historical criticism, set aside as not history but illusion, though there is no part of Scripture more manifestly historical; and some have felt that there is scarcely anything in the Gospels at once so real and precious, or more stamped with vivid reality and self-evidencing truth. To the

¹ Harnack's *History of Dogma*, p. 65.

² 1 Cor. 15.

³ See Westcott's *Revelation of the Risen Lord*: "The Gospel of the Resurrection."

Ritschlians, Jesus is simply the man who alone has realised the ideal of God in the creation of man, made the one perfect revelation of God, identified Himself with God and His "world end," and became the founder of the Kingdom of God, and the concrete embodiment of its life and principle. He was a Son of God only in a higher degree than other men, by the absolute surrender of Himself to the will and purpose of God,¹ who attained supremacy over the world by faith, and taught others how to do the same through union with Him. He was simply, as Nitzsch, a Ritschlian, puts it, *primus inter pares*, but with nothing supernatural either in His person or work. Not God, nor the eternal Son, nor the Creator, nor the Ruler of nature or providence, nor miracle-worker, nor Lord of men and angels, nor Redeemer of sinful men, nor the resurrection and the life, nor the risen Christ, nor the living, ever-present Head of His Church—Immanuel, nor the Word of God (ὁ λόγος), nor the coming Judge of all. All this, which forms the burden, the substance, the core and the essence of the N.T. revelation, is disowned, ignored, or declared to be "metaphysics," of no moment to faith. And yet they profess to specially honour Christ, while robbing Him of all His essential attributes as God and Son of God, depriving Him of everything absolutely necessary to His being the Saviour of sinful men, disowning all His greatest works, as Creator, Redeemer, and Lord of all, and denying or ignoring most of what He did, and said, and claimed to be. In short, their whole conception of Christ and His work is based upon a false and perverted subjectivity which practically sets aside the objective Christ of Scripture, and gives us a Christ of their own imagination. A Christ formed not from the N.T., but of their own preconceptions of what His consciousness was, as derived from their own ideas, and their arbitrary selections from the supposed consciousness of the Christian community. And their conceptions of His redemptive work are such that His vicarious sacrifice by which He made propitiation for our sins—which is the core and essence of our religion—is denied, or evaporated. For they make His death simply a proof of His fidelity to conscience; and a warrant for our confidence in God. Yet, if His death was not vicarious, there is nothing so destructive of confidence in God as the sufferings of the Cross.

¹ Professor Orr's *Ritschlian Theology*, p. 82.

THE RITSCHLIAN CRITICISM OF CHRIST'S TEACHING.

It is when the Ritschlians give specifically their views of the teaching and consciousness of Christ that we best see how sharply their conceptions conflict with His, how largely they disown His deepest convictions, and how oracularly they reject much of His weightiest teaching, while yet professing to supremely honour it and Him. True, they in words give Him and His teaching a unique place,—not only a supreme, but apparently the sole place in our religion,—not only the one perfect revelation of God, but the only source and test of the Christian faith.¹ In fact, they give His teaching a place that He disclaims, and which is contrary to His teaching. For they not only speak of it as the sole source of Christian doctrine, but they make it the touchstone by which the teaching of prophets and apostles is tested, and by which both are found wanting and largely condemned; and their teaching is received only when Ritschlians think it agrees with His, and rejected when it differs from their ideas of His teaching. But with all this vociferated magnifying of Jesus and His teaching as the sole and perfect revelation of God, they by no means own the infallibility or Divine authority of His teaching and conceptions. On the contrary, they distinctly disown and reject as error or illusion much of what He believed and taught. They scruple not to avow this, and to set forth in large and specific detail His errors, misconceptions, and exegetical mistakes. They fear not even to charge Him with ignorance and error, but in effect with superstition and sin; for they charge Him with cherishing the Jewish pride and selfishness of the prevalent worldly ideas as to the Messiah, as appears from Wendt.

GENERAL DENIAL OF HIS DIVINE CLAIMS.

As seen, they utterly disown His Deity, eternal Sonship, and Creatorship, which He unquestionably claimed, and all Scripture teaches. They distinctly deny the incarnation and His real pre-existence, although He ever taught both, and expressly said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8^{56, 58}); and on the eve of His death prayed, "O Father, glorify

¹ See Dr. Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 49-51.

Thou Me with Thine own self with the *glory which I had with Thee before the world was* (John 17^{5, 24}). The N.T. everywhere proclaims the same. So that it is not merely, as Dr. Orr says,¹ the old question as to Homoousian and Homoiousian; for even the Arians admitted His pre-existence, and some of them went far towards even the eternal Sonship, though holding that there was a time when He was not. But the Ritschlians deny His pre-existence altogether, and date His being from His human birth, like any ordinary man, and exclude everything supernatural even from that. They also negative or ignore anything supernatural in His life. His miracles, on which He laid such stress as evidences of His Divine character and mission, and to which He so often appealed as His Father's seal to His Divine claims, which left the Jews without excuse, are openly rejected, the supernatural character of His mighty works is utterly denied, and their evidential value for His Divine claims repudiated. Ritschl and others reject the very idea of miracle as precluded by the inexorable reign of physical law. Wendt explains Jesus' convictions and declarations that He wrought miracles by the power of God, or, as he puts it, "that these striking events were produced by the supernatural power of an invisible being"²—by His adopting as true the current delusions and superstitions of His benighted age and race, because He knew not of the universal reign of natural laws,—though He was their maker and upholder. And though they thus disown His most explicit teaching, repudiate His strongest claims, treat His deepest convictions as delusions, and reject *in toto* His proved miracles, which form so much of His whole recorded history; yet they profess to honour Him and His teaching supremely, and to make His recorded consciousness the sole source of their theology and of our knowledge of God; and avow as the basis of the whole system a return to the historical Christ!—when His history is largely treated as fiction, His deepest consciousness as delusion, His chief claims as empty "metaphysics," and His weightiest teaching as error! His resurrection, which the N.T. makes the foundation-stone of the Christian faith, and Christ ever spoke of as the crowning proof of His Divine claims, they deny as illusion, or ignore as incapable

¹ Dr. Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*.

² Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*, p. 168.

of proof, or regard as a matter of indifference ; although Christ staked the truth of His religion upon it, and God gave it as His supreme seal to Christ's claims, and history holds it as its most surely established fact.

THE ALLEGED SPECIFIC ERRORS OF JESUS' TEACHING.

When he comes to the specific criticism, Wendt, at the outset, avows that his setting-up the ideal of Jesus' teaching does not "prejudge the question whether the teaching of Jesus does not comprise some heterogeneous and mutually contradictory elements."¹ It is thus frankly declared that though Jesus' teaching is ideal, and the only source of our knowledge of God, and the one perfect revelation of Him, it may be self-contradictory. At first it appears as if this were an open question ; but it is soon seen to be closed, and that, too, in the wrong way—against the truth and authority of most of His weightiest teaching and deepest convictions. Much of what He taught and believed is precluded by the first but false principles of their system. Hence Wendt owns that he has "left out of account certain sayings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels"² (he might have said most of them), obviously because they do not accord with his false presuppositions. Thus the vitiating rationalistic principle of the system is avowed at the outset, notwithstanding all the professed aversion to philosophy in theology, and the avowed antagonism to Rationalism. No wonder that the results are sufficiently antichristian. According to Wendt and the Ritschlians generally, Jesus erred in His teaching and beliefs all along the line.

I. AS TO GOD.

He erred as to God. True, they proclaim as their keynote that Jesus was the one perfect revelation of God. But then they aver that He erred and taught error as to God's character, work, and relations to nature and man. They imply that in various stages and aspects He did not truly know God ; though He said, "As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father" (John 10¹⁵). But how He could be or give a perfect revelation of God with such ignorance and error they have never tried to

¹ Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*, p. 20.

² P. 7.

explain! As seen, Wendt teaches that Christ erred in supposing that His miracles were wrought through God's power, or that they were miracles at all. The very idea that they were supernatural, or wrought by God's interposition, was one of the superstitious delusions of the times which Jesus held and taught, and never rose above. As with God's power and providence, so with God's love. Jesus is said not only to have erred and taught error, but to have contradicted Himself; because He, as Wendt avers, in His earlier teaching, limited God's love, by the word "neighbour," to the Jews, whereas in His later teaching He extended it to all!¹ But this is a palpable perversion of the very text adduced, and a culpable contradiction of the manifest facts of the case. For never was the universality of God's love so grandly proclaimed as in His own divinest words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son," which He uttered near the beginning of His ministry, long before the words on which the charge is by perversion founded. Besides, it was at the very entrance on His ministry that the Baptist said, with His approval, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." And to say nothing else, it was in His inaugural public teaching in the great Sermon on the Mount, which lays down the universal and eternal principles of the kingdom of God, that He taught men to rise to that Divine moral altitude of love to our enemies, and to render good for evil; in order that we may, by being perfect in love, be children of our Father in heaven, who "maketh His sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust"; and surely these are world-wide and universal. So that the error and contradiction are not in Jesus' teaching, but in the critics of it, who at the same time pretend to be the supreme upholders of it.

Similarly, by their absurd principle that nature and history give no revelation of God—which contradicts all Scripture, philosophy, and reason—Jesus' sublime allusions to these as manifestations of God, with which His teaching teems, come in thus for condemnation. For to Him the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, the fall of a sparrow and the shedding of a hair of our head—all the objects of nature and all the events of life—were radiant and resonant with thoughts and revelations of our heavenly Father, and found expression by Him,

¹ Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 297, 331.

as the perfect interpreter of both, in figures and language that have ever since charmed, and taught, and thrilled mankind; and thrown a wondrous light and halo round all nature and history—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God by the revelation of Jesus Christ. To Him and through Him the visions and raptures of ancient psalmody become luminous and vocal as never before, that “the heavens declare the glory of God,” and that “the whole earth is full of His glory”; and to Him modern poetry owes its visions that—

“Earth is crammed with heaven,”

and

“Every common bush aglow with God,”

and that

“The meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

2. AS TO MAN AND GOD'S REVELATION TO MEN.

The Ritschlians also presumptuously preclude God from all direct access to and communion with the human soul, and thereby shut out all supernatural revelation.¹ Therefore Christ's teaching, which is permeated with this Divine fact, so precious verified in Christian experience, is set aside as untrue, because, forsooth! it does not accord with their preposterous preconceptions. As if the Creator could be excluded from access to the minds of His creatures; or as if it were impossible for God to reveal Himself to the intelligent beings He created, and to whom He imparts the power for every mental act. Nay more, they by this absurd assumption destroy their own root principle. For Jesus was a man—they say a mere man—and, therefore, if God has no direct access to man's mind, then He had none to Christ's; and how then could He know or reveal God, far less make a perfect revelation of God and His mind?—which is the prime postulate of their false and self-contradictory system. In fact, on their first root principles, neither Christ nor any other human being can either manifest or know God, nor can God manifest Himself to man, since in nature and providence there is no revelation of God, and He has no direct access to the human soul. The Creator and His creatures are thus separated and paralysed by this absurd philosophy.

¹ Dr. Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 85-89.

3. AS TO ANGELS AND DEVILS.

Again, as Christ has erred in His teaching as to God and man, and the relation between them, so He has erred in His belief in and teaching about the existence and mediation of angels. Jesus, like the Jews of His time, *imagined* a series of intermediary beings between God and the world, who were the media of God's will, working in the world and men; but this was only a popular delusion, so that the whole history and teaching both of Scripture and of Christ as to angels are error, not reality—not fact, but fiction.

He also held and taught the prevalent superstition of later Judaism, not only as to spirits good, but as to spirits evil who tempted men, and were even supposed to possess and torment them. Jesus was so much deluded by this vulgar superstition as to imagine and believe that He Himself was tempted of the devil, and actually went about deluding Himself and others with the fable that He was casting out devils! Whereas evil spirits never existed except in His own and others' superstitious fears and fancies! What men in their gross darkness called evil spirits were only their own evil passions; and what Christ thought were to Himself temptations of the devil, were only oppositions from the words and acts of men!¹ So that the whole convictions, teaching, and action of our Lord about devils,—which form such a large part of the Gospel records, on which they profess to base their system, were delusions; and His consciousness, which they avow to be the one source of their theology, was in this, as in so many other things, a deception! And yet they pretend to specially honour Jesus, and to make His teaching the test of Christian doctrine, and His consciousness the sole source and norm of our knowledge of God and true religion.

4. AS TO HIMSELF AND HIS WORK.

As on God and man, angels and devils, Jesus erred and taught error, so also in regard to Himself and His work. As seen, they charge Him with error in thinking and teaching that He was the eternal Son of God, or that He existed, as He said, "before the world was," or "before Abraham," or really at all

¹ Wendt, pp. 161-163.

before His earthly life. And even then He was not the Son of God in any distinctive sense, but merely "the first and supreme realisation of the ideal relationship between God and man foretold in Scripture as characteristic of the Messianic time";¹ nor did He know that the title "Son of God" was to be His till His baptism;² nor was it His till then,—although His first recorded utterance at twelve years of age reveals His consciousness of being the Son of God (Luke 2⁴⁹); and in His last great prayer on the eve of His death He claimed the glory which He had with the Father as His eternal Son "before the foundation of the world" (John 17²⁴). Also, as seen, He erred in supposing that He wrought miracles, or cast out devils by the power of God, or was Himself tempted of the devil—all that was vulgar superstition, which He never escaped from.

Similarly Jesus, they say, did not know He was to be the Messiah till the eve of His public work. He only thought of being a member of the kingdom of God, not the King, and was preparing Himself for it like others by repentance when He was suddenly called to the Messiahship—like Paul by sudden conversion to apostleship.³ His views of the kingdom, too, changed after He began His public work.⁴ He thought God would speedily bring in the Messianic kingdom, and expected His work would find speedy success,⁵ till the stern facts undeceived Him, revealed His delusion, brought home the conviction of the failure of His mission, and created the idea of a future kingdom.⁶ His conceptions of the kingdom were simply the current, carnal, Jewish idea of a great earthly prince who was to conquer the world, exalt Israel over all nations, and usher in an age of material prosperity and glory—the product of Jewish pride and national selfishness—which Jesus cherished just like His carnal and ambitious countrymen until near the end!⁷ So that He is by implication charged not only with ignorance and error and contradiction in teaching, but with sharing in the prevalent Jewish pride, selfishness, and sin.

He erred also in supposing that His death was vicarious, when it was simply suffering for righteousness' sake, and for being a faithful witness for God and the truth. He was wrong, too, in imagining and foretelling that He would rise from

¹ Wendt, p. 100.² P. 99.³ Pp. 97, 379.⁴ P. 379.⁵ P. 397.⁶ P. 379.⁷ Pp. 380, 391.

the dead, which He never did, nor could, because natural law made that impossible! Ritschlian omniscience has, indeed, discovered that it was psychologically impossible for Jesus to have foreseen the external failure of His preaching, and of the necessity of His sufferings and death,¹ especially in the earlier stages. Yea, Jesus held and taught not only erroneous, but even contradictory views of Himself and His work at different stages; and even His command to love our enemies is held to contradict an earlier opposite command,—though there is no proof of the one, and no truth in the other; but the reverse is demonstrable in both cases.

5. AS TO THE FUTURE LIFE.

His whole teaching about the future life also, especially about the judgment-day, was a delusive dream.² He thought, and taught, and proceeded on the assumption that it was near, and that His disciples then living would see it, and imagined that He would be living on the earth then, and as the Messiah effect the transition from the Church's earthly to its heavenly state.³ But all this was mere illusion and error, which the stern facts at length convinced Him of against His wish and hope, if not His will,—though there is not a shadow of evidence given for this, but there is abundance to the contrary.

As to the resurrection and eternal life of the individual, Jesus took decidedly the part of later Judaism as represented by the Pharisees, in opposition to the older prophets,⁴—than which there was never a greater perversion of the patent facts. His whole teaching about the resurrection of the dead was a delusive dream, because physical laws made that an impossibility. His vision of His second coming was a vain illusion derived from apocryphal fantastic imaginations. His sublime revelations and awful provisions of the judgment-day, with Himself as Judge to render unto every man according to his works, were either not His own, or, like the unsubstantial fabric of a dream, could never become realities, because "retribution" had no existence in Divine government.⁵ His views of heaven were an "imaginative luxury"⁶—a Utopia not to be seriously entertained; and

¹ Wendt, p. 379.

² P. 397.

³ P. 397.

⁴ Pp. 31, 223.

⁵ Ritschl.

⁶ Wendt, p. 162.

of hell, an old-world superstition, precluded by the very idea of God, whose only attribute is love !

6. AS TO HOLY SCRIPTURE.

They have even the audacity to declare that He did not know that the O.T. was fulfilled in Himself ; and yet that was His most explicit and absolute teaching, and the burden of His message from first to last (Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁸, Luke 24^{25-27 44-47}).¹

This leads into the Ritschlians' alleged erroneousness of His teaching on Scripture. They generally admit and urge that Jesus held and taught the permanent value and authority of the O.T., and that He took the view held by the Jews and by the plain Christian man—that the Bible is the veritable Word of God ;² and Wendt maintains that the Gospels are the same in substance. It is well and significant to have such statements made by such opponents of the Bible claim, for it confirms the fact urged above that no honest interpretation of Christ's teaching on, use of, and attitude to Scripture could come to any other conclusion. But then they aver that He erred in this also. They distinctly deny what He held and taught, that the Bible is in any sense a rule of faith, and declare that Protestantism has as really hindered true religion and the knowledge of God by making the Bible the norm of faith and life as Romanism has by holding the infallibility of the pope.³ They allege that Jesus held the current Jewish views of Messiah until He saw the impious principles on which they were based,⁴ so that He for a time was guilty of cherishing the impiety. They say that He believed in the reality of such persons as Abel and Abraham, and referred to such events as the Fall, the Flood, and the destruction of Sodom as unquestionable facts.⁵ But in these He was simply teaching the crude traditional imaginations ; for the persons were only ideal, and the events fables ! Jesus said that John the Baptist was Elias ; but this was not borne out by the original Scripture ! therefore, here as elsewhere He made exegetical mistakes.⁶ So that He misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misrepresented Scripture ; whilst His endorsing and using it

¹ Wendt, p. 96.

² P. 263.

³ P. 2.

⁴ Ritschl. See Dr. Orr, pp. 97-99.

⁵ Wendt, p. 102, etc.

⁶ P. 67.

as He did misled men, and has perpetuated these traditional misconceptions, till the omniscient Ritschlians arose to put them and Him right!

7. ERRORS COMMON TO CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES—
A THEOLOGY WITHOUT THE HOLY GHOST.

As the Master erred, so did the disciples on such questions, and even more seriously. Like Jesus, Paul erred in teaching that there was any connection between sin and death, or any such things as wrath, and curse, and retribution,—all such being inconsistent with the love of God, which is universal and eternal. Paul, too, erred in his teaching about the law, and that the men under it were saved by works, not by grace,—the direct opposite of his teaching. The discourses in John also, we must not interpret as the writer does, for that is erroneous; and the whole doctrine of the Logos must be frankly abandoned in the interest of faith itself.¹ And all the apostolic writers of the N.T. have erred in their interpretations of the consciousness of Jesus, and have largely misrepresented Him and His teaching. Both Christ and His apostles, the Ritschlians aver, have greatly erred in their teaching on the Holy Ghost. For Ritschlians ignore the Holy Spirit, and imply that no such Being as the third Person of the Godhead ever existed; and they teach that the Holy Spirit is no more than the common spirit of the Christian community²—an impersonal abstraction. A so-called Christian theology without the Holy Ghost!—a body without a soul; a spiritual impossibility. And all such ideas as “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost”; “It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you”; and our Lord’s repeated promises to send the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth; and the apostles being filled with the Holy Ghost, and speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance; and Christ’s attributing all He said, and did, and accomplished to the Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4¹⁸, Matt. 12²⁸); and that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” the Holy Ghost,—which so pervade and dominate the teaching of

¹ Kaftan, *The Relation of the Evangelical Faith to the Logos Doctrine*. See Dr. Orr, p. 110.

² See Dr. Denney’s *Studies on Theology*, p. 156.

Christ and His apostles,—are ignored, disowned, or explained away. No wonder that, ignoring God the Holy Ghost, and being strangers to His power, and denying His very existence, His product—the Holy Scriptures, and the teaching of our Lord and His apostles should be so misunderstood and perverted.

For “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (2 Cor. 2¹⁴).

THE RITSCHLIAN ABANDONMENT OF CHRIST'S TEACHING AND RELIGION.

Well does Dr. Denney say, “In ignoring the Resurrection, in ignoring the gift and the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which so interpret the life and death of Christ as to make them the foundation of the Christian religion, Ritschl seems to me to abandon the N.T. altogether.”¹

When to this is added that, as seen above, the Ritschlians not only deny the resurrection, but also the incarnation of Christ, reject the atonement and Divinity of our Lord, and disown the miracles and the chief teaching of our God and Saviour, because these will not assimilate with their false philosophy, it seems a misuse of language to call their theology Christian, or their religious philosophy real Christianity. They reject His teaching in all the leading doctrines along the whole line. They charge Him with grave error and false teaching as to God and man, angels and devils, Himself and His work; the Holy Ghost and the word of God, the fall of man and the redemption in Christ, the way of salvation and the resurrection of the dead; the second advent, the final judgment, and the everlasting destinies; the interpretation of the past, the revelation of the future, and the Divine moral government of past, present, and future—in all the chief truths distinctive of the Christian faith. And they fear not to aver that the Son of God and the Revealer of the Father, the Saviour of men and the Judge of all, began and long prosecuted His work in error and delusion as to His mission and His message, His Kingdom and Himself, teaching superstition for truth, and cherishing Jewish ambition unto personal sin. The Ritschlian school first place the teaching

¹ Dr. Denney, p. 142.

of Christ and of His apostles in antithesis and antagonism, in order to discredit the apostles and the authority of their writings, although they know nothing of Christ or His teaching except through them,—even as the expired Tübingen school put the apostles in opposition to each other in order to destroy the trustworthiness of the N.T. Scriptures.

They next, despite all their professed honour of Christ and of His teaching, assail that teaching in all the main truths along the whole line of the Christian revelation, in order to clear the way for their own poor philosophy. And what emerges from their self-created chaos, as the true system of Christian doctrine, is not the Christianity of the apostles, or the religion of Christ, but a meagre and a miserable religious mongrel, a false and a bastard Ritschlian theology, on which no soul could ever live, and on which no man would dare to die.

THE SUBSTANCE AND OUTCOME OF THE RITSCHLIAN SYSTEM.

And what is the outcome and substance of this pretentious system which claims to give a better interpretation of the consciousness of Christ than His apostles, and proposes to replace the faith once for all delivered unto the saints by holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and which has been held fast by the Church of Christ through the Spirit's grace from the beginning? A poor and soulless religious philosophy, falsely so called, which utterly fails to meet the deepest needs of sinful men, eliminates almost everything distinctive of the Christian faith, would rob Christ of all that, as the God-man, fits Him to be a Saviour, and leave a struggling humanity with an empty man-made husk instead of a God-given Gospel for a religion.

For when it is asked of the Ritschlians, "What is God?" a bewildering variety, yea contrariety of answers is given, all of which are wrong, or seriously defective. God and His love become little more than "an abstraction of the purpose of the universe," and is to be thought of more as a "help-conception" than a reality. Indeed, "it may be left an open question whether there is a God or not."¹ Yea, "as far as maintaining the impulse to religious faith is concerned, it does not matter whether our

¹ Dr. Orr's *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 256; Dr. Denney, p. 8.

conception of the world is theistic, pantheistic, or materialistic."¹ God is not ruled by a nature, but is only "absolute will,"² and has no immediate access to, nor works directly on or in the human soul; and there is no revelation of God in nature or providence! Religion, indeed, is not a primary relation of the soul to God, but man's relation to the world! and, "rationally, there is no means of showing that religion is not a pure illusion."³ If at times God is spoken of as a Person, He is only love, and the Father of all by creation; thus all intelligent creatures, men and devils, are His children; and there is, therefore, no perdition, or "wrath," or "retribution" for any moral being, nor any moral government of men by reward or punishment here or hereafter!⁴ And this is the new ideal figment of a God—the crude creation of vain dreamers by which they delude themselves and others, and propose to replace the real living God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is ever revealed by Him and in Scripture, in nature and in providence, as a God of righteousness as well as of love, of justice as of mercy.

And what is the Son of God in this new theology that pretends so specially to honour Him? A mere man,—though the best and the highest man, and the perfect revelation of God,—yet not God in any sense, only a man with no pre-existence, or Divine incarnation, or supernatural origin or powers, who never wrought miracles, or rose from the dead, or redeemed men by His vicarious death, or reconciled God and sinners by His atoning blood; who taught many errors on all religious subjects, indulged many delusions which stern facts dispelled, believed many superstitions current in His time, and cherished Jewish ambitions with their worldly Messiah, selfishness, and sin; who never ascended to heaven, nor acts as our High Priest, nor will ever return again, nor be our Judge or Lord of all. He was, in short, nothing of what He was, and claimed, and proved Himself to be.

¹ Hermann and Ritschl. See Dr. Orr's *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 45; and Dr. Denney's *Studies in Theology*, p. 8.

² See Lichtenberger, p. 581.

³ Hermann, *ibid.* p. 585.

⁴ Ritschl at first held punishment for sin strictly, but afterwards rejected "retribution" and "wrath" entirely as inconsistent with a God whose one attribute is love.

And what place has the Holy Ghost in this improved theology? Absolutely none! No such being ever existed; and consequently never inspired prophet, or apostle, or Scripture; so there is no such thing as supernatural revelation. He never anointed Christ, or descended on apostles at Pentecost, or convinces men of sin, or converts sinners unto God, or quickens souls into spiritual life, or unites believers to Christ, or makes them new creatures in Him: nor is there, therefore, any such spiritual reality as the new birth, or the spirit of adoption, or sanctification, or the power from on high, or the Divine unction, witness, or sealing, through the Holy Ghost,—though these are the surest facts of Christian experience from the beginning until now, as certainly established facts as any in science, history, or life.

In short, in this crude and incoherent conglomerate of religion and philosophy, which is as false in philosophy as it is anti-scriptural in theology, and which never could be practical as a religion for any Christian Church or spiritual man, there is neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost; nor angel, nor devil, nor man created in God's image; nor Fall in Adam, or redemption in Christ by His atoning sacrifice; nor original sin, or imputed righteousness; nor death by sin, or life in Christ; nor regeneration by the Holy Ghost, or adoption by grace; nor justification by faith, or sanctification by the Spirit; nor union to Christ, or Sonship in Jesus in the Bible sense; nor blessed death, or glorious resurrection; nor second advent, or final judgment; nor heaven, or hell; nor eternal life, or eternal death; nor any of all the Christian verities centred and rooted in these, which form the substance, burden, and distinctive elements of the Christian faith. So that it is a palpable perversion of facts, and a manifest misnomer, to call this mongrel system Christian. It would be nearer the truth to call it antichristian; for it not only eliminates or evaporates the distinctive truths and elements of the Christian religion, but it openly disowns most of them, and teaches the opposite.

With all its avowed antagonism to rationalism and metaphysics in theology, it is itself a real rationalism in another form, without the clearness and the honesty of the older rationalism. For it attempts to father its rationalism on Christ, and to force its system on Scripture; whereas, while professing to honour

Him and His teaching, it really rejects almost everything He taught and claimed ; and while emphasising Scripture, it disowns so much of it, and so perverts the rest, that, as Stählin says of Ritschl, it "sinks down into the merest illusion."¹ Under avowed aversion to "metaphysics" (in which it includes all the Divine revelations about the Trinity, the two natures in Christ, original sin, and the resurrection and the future life, etc.), it seeks to conceal its antagonism to everything supernatural, or what does not accord with its own erroneous presuppositions ; and specially, as Dr. Denney well says, covers its "positive disbelief of everything that gives Christ's Godhead an objective character."² In connection with the keystone of the N.T. revelation—the redemption and atonement of Christ—which the Ritschlians find so difficult to evade, the N.T. authority is distinctly disowned, and the baldest rationalism is boldly avowed that one man's thoughts can have no binding authority for another ! This sheer rationalism involves the rejection of the authority not only of the apostolic writers, but also of their Lord and God, as well as of God the Holy Spirit who inspired both, and of God the Father who sent them and Him, and whose words, in His name, and by His authority, both they and He spoke.

It is a vague, one-sided, fragmentary, and narrow-based system ; dominated and vitiated by a philosophy whose fundamental postulate is false. With all its oracular assurance, it is full of errors and inconsistencies, conflicts, and contradictions ; most arbitrary in its methods, and capricious in its criticism, ever-changing in its vaunted results—begetting a painful uncertainty on what it concerns men most surely to know ; evincing and developing a dangerous subjectivity,³ which tends to resolve religion into illusion ; leads each errant and erring mind to become an authority to itself above Scripture and Christ, and implies the supremacy of Reason over Revelation ; logically ends in utter rationalism, and ultimately requires or warrants agnosticism and unbelief : given, also, to ignoble compromise in advising abandonment of Bible truths to avoid conflict with the modern naturalistic spirit ; and withal so vague, confused, and

¹ See Dr. Orr's *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 111.

² *Studies in Theology*, p. 14 ; *ibid.* p. 279.

³ See Dr. Orr's *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 51.

equivocal often¹ as to make one who has tried to plod his weary way through the dreary wanderings of their misty philosophisings to the clear and radiant pages of the Divine Word, feel that it is like passing from darkness into light, from the foggy and soporific mazes of Ritschlian speculation into the radiancy and exhilaration of Christian Revelation, from the blinding fogs and stifling air of a city underground railway to the brilliant light and exhilarating breezes of a heath-clad hill robed in its autumn glory.

No wonder that, as Dr. Orr says,² Ritschlianism, the more it is known, is on its decline in the land of its birth and the universities of its growth; and will in due course add another layer to the fossilised remains of the ephemeral phases of German religious speculation, which have had their day and ceased to be, while the word of the Lord, which they so roughly handled, liveth and abideth for ever.

THE COMMON RATIONALISTIC PRINCIPLE AND CONCLUSION.

It has been shown above, by illustrations from three outstanding, typical schools or phases of recent speculation on Scripture, that all theories which invade or impair the integrity or solidarity of God's word, or which place the teaching of Christ in antagonism or antithesis to the teaching of the prophets or apostles, or other Scripture writers, are without foundation, arise from and produce error, and are fraught with peril to the Christian faith. The evils and the errors might be further shown through all the numerous forms and applications of the pernicious principle from which all such dissections and disintegrations of Scripture spring. For some select for supreme honour and authority the O.T. and others the N.T. In the O.T. some take the Law, others the Prophets. In the N.T. some take the Gospels, and others the Epistles. In the Gospels many choose the Synoptics, and others John. Of the Synoptics many select Mark, others Luke, and others still Matthew. In the Gospels

¹ Lichtenberger says: "Ritschl's theology is essentially lacking in clearness and simplicity, and cannot be wholly vindicated of taking pleasure in equivocation,—nor in the exposition of Biblical ideas has he been able to escape the accusation of seeking to throw dust in the eyes of his readers."

² *The Ritschlian Theology*, p. 270.

many moderns make the isolated words of Jesus alone supreme, and the test of all else in Scripture ; while others prefer the words of the apostles as fuller and final. Others give the supreme authority to the words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, and make them the touchstone of all other words. Some make the Epistles of Paul the standard, and others the Epistles and Gospel of John as the highest and last revelations. Some take their own arbitrary selections from all Scripture, others their own selected fragments of the words of Jesus, severed from the imagined encrustations and perversions of the Gospel writers ; and others still boldly set aside all the words of both Christ and His apostles save what they capriciously think best, or suits their preconceived theories and principles. And so this selective and pervertive process of unwarrantable fragmentation and disintegration of God's one Divine Word has gone on and may go on *ad infinitum* ; till at length, on the common root principle, there is and can be logically left no standard or authority at all, save that every errant and variable person becomes, and must become, a standard and authority to himself, and takes just as much or as little of God's word as he thinks fit, or none at all, should he think best ; and what he may select has then no intrinsic, or independent, far less Divine authority, but only such as every erring individual mind may at any time choose to give it,—which is a manifest but inevitable *reductio ad absurdum*.

It will be fully shown below, what may be obvious now, how easily the sceptic can thus make havoc of and pulverise Christianity by seizing and urging the common root principle, and setting the conflictory resultant theories and applications against each other to the overthrow of all, and the destruction of the Christian faith. Meantime let it suffice to have indicated this.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST'S TEACHING ON HOLY SCRIPTURE.

CHRIST's teaching on leading doctrines controverted has been given partially above in antithesis to various types and phases of prevalent error. A completer though concise summary of it, arranged in order, will be found in the Appendix. But in closing this book, we give here a brief outline of His teaching on Holy Scripture, as that is the chief subject of this work, and He makes it the basis of His teaching on all other subjects, and by it He declares the Divine authority of all. Since our whole knowledge of Him and of His teaching is derived from the Scriptures, His teaching on them necessarily underlies all His teaching, and tells us what authority belongs to His own and the inspired writers' words on everything. It is of supreme importance now, because it is the burning question of our time, the authoritative settlement of which is devoutly to be desired, and will largely carry with it the settlement of most other religious questions. Only a brief summary can be given here,—chiefly His own words on, use of, and attitude to Scripture, with emphasis on leading passages, main facts, and outstanding phenomena,—especially as His words speak for themselves with unique decisiveness. Fuller statement and use of this will be made when giving general proof of the Bible claim and doctrine in Book IV. and the general Appendix. The complete proof cannot, indeed, be even outlined; because it is so vast and varied that it would involve transcription and application of most of His whole recorded teaching, as the Bible claim is expressed or implied almost everywhere. Nor is it necessary to enlarge, as it is generally admitted now that Christ stands by Scripture, and regards it as the common Christian and the Church of Christ have ever done—even as the Word of God, as shown in the creeds of Christendom; and they have done so supremely

because His own words and usage are so absolute and decisive as to preclude any opposing view, and to shut up all honest and reasonable interpretation to this as final,—at least to all to whom Christ's teaching and authority are final. Hence the abler and more candid opponents of this Bible claim (which is endorsed and declared with such Divine decisiveness and inevasible absoluteness by Christ)—such as the Ritschlians, Rationalists, with some Kenotics, and all anti-supernaturalists, as well as many others, and some avowedly evangelical, but more or less in sympathy with these in their principles or results—frankly own that honest interpretation of Christ's teaching requires this to be openly acknowledged. Quite consistently, and of necessity, they disown the finality or authority and deny the truth and trustworthiness of His teaching on this first and fundamental religious question, and they explicitly assert the erroneousness and unreliability of His teaching thereon,—though it underlies His teaching on all other subjects, and is the necessary basis of every Christian doctrine. But as there are those who in the face of the clearest evidence and of His most decisive words and usage aver that Christ does not endorse but condemn the Bible claim, and as Jesus' teaching on this primary root-question is made so much of now and is in itself so important, we shall give here a condensed summary of the evidence. We, of course, assume here the general credibility and substantial truthfulness of those parts of Scripture which embody Jesus' teaching; for this at least is beyond question, and is admitted by all those whose views we are now opposing, and it has to be postulated by all desiring to ascertain what His teaching is, for it is solely out of the materials there supplied that we can gather or form any conception or system of His teaching. So that we of necessity assume here the general trustworthiness of those Scriptures which contain His teaching, as all must at the outset, if we are to ascertain what His teaching was at all, as all well may in the light of the facts, backed up with the whole weight of the Christian evidences and the tests those Scriptures have stood so well so long in the fiercest fires and the most searching criticism that ever a literature has been subjected to, and as none can, at this stage, refuse to do without unreasonableness and absurdity, as Butler well reasons.¹ These Scriptures are

¹ See Dr. Lee, *The Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, p. 93, etc.

the Gospels, the Acts, and the Apocalypse, with fragments in the Epistles ; and from these, in this view, we quote indiscriminately. From these it will be evident, if His language, usage, action, and attitude can prove anything, that our Lord held and taught in the clearest and most decisive way the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority and inviolability of Holy Scripture in its integrity, and that the Bible is the word of God, and the Divine rule of faith and life. And as our Lord is God, His words, declaring the Bible to be the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority, are the Word of God, and should decide the question finally for all who own Him Lord. The Incarnate Word of God declares the Written Word of God to be the word of God,—true, trustworthy, and Divinely authoritative ; and His words teaching this are the word of God. Therefore, in giving the teaching of Christ as to Scripture, we give His explicit words the first place.

I. CHRIST'S TEACHING IN EXPLICIT PASSAGES.

(1) THE *LOCUS CLASSICUS*, MATT. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁹.

Here Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁹ might be called the *locus classicus*, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Several things conspire to give this passage a unique importance.

First. Its place in Christ's teaching. It is at the beginning of Christ's public teaching, in His great Sermon on the Mount, which was the solemn and formal inauguration of His ministry, in which He laid down once for all the first principles and fundamental laws of His kingdom—the manifesto of the King. It therefore has and carries all the peculiar weight that belongs to such a declaration made for such purposes and given in such circumstances.

Second. Its position in Holy Scripture. It connects the O.T. with the New. It is the vital and vitalising organ uniting them into a living organic whole, to which the ever-living Lord Himself gave life and virtue. It is rooted in the one and is the root of the other. It is the full fruitage of the Old and the vivifying seed of the New Revelation. It therefore voices in the very words of very God the mind of God as to the word

of God from first to last, and should therefore lead all who fear the Lord to receive it as the word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever.

Third. Its scope. It is the Lord's declaration as to *all* Scripture given by inspiration of God ; for the titles the Law and the Prophets,¹ or the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms² (the Hagiographa), or occasionally the Law alone,³ as used by our Lord, were the familiar designations of the whole O.T. writings, so well known to Jesus and the Jews as the word of the Lord, because recognised to be the word of the Lord, because given by the Spirit of the Lord. Whatever, therefore, the passage predicates, it predicates of all Divinely-inspired Scripture (*πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος*), and of all equally—of the O.T. directly and explicitly, of the N.T. indirectly and by necessary implication *à fortiori*, for no Christian claims more for the O.T. than the New, especially as both are given by the one inspiring Spirit—God the Holy Ghost.

Fourth. Its character. It is a direct decisive deliverance on the doctrine of Holy Scripture given by the Lord Himself, when professedly treating of the subject at the entrance on His public ministry, and when expressly laying down the foundations, laws, and first principles of His kingdom for all who were and would be His disciples. So that it possesses all the Divine weight and authority of a formal Divine deliverance given by Incarnate God at the supreme moment of the solemn public inauguration of His kingdom.

Fifth. The manner of its declaration. It is given in His most august, impressive style. In it He uses, for the *first* time, His solemn and majestic "Verily I say unto you"; which He never uses except before the most important utterances, which assumes the tone of supreme legislative authority, and which implies the highest Divine claims, since the making and giving of laws for the people of God was the prerogative of God alone, for the Lord was their Lawgiver. It is therefore the solemn deliverance of the Divine Lawgiver.

Sixth. Its nature. The Divine absoluteness and sublime majesty of this declaration is awe-inspiring, and constrains every reverent soul to say, "I'll hear what God the Lord will say,"

¹ Matt. 5¹⁷, Luke 16³¹ 24²⁷.

² Luke 24⁴⁴.

³ John 10³⁴, Ps. 82⁶ 35¹⁹ 69⁴ etc.

"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," arrests and awes, and leaves a profound impression of the sacredness, perpetuity, and inviolability, even of minutest points, in every "jot and tittle" of Holy Writ; and when this majestic utterance is crowned and sealed with His sublime "heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words (about Holy Scripture as about everything else) shall not pass away," one feels that language has reached the limit of preciseness and majesty, absoluteness and finality.

Seventh. The relation of this Divine utterance to the Divine Speaker. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" the law and the prophets, declares the Divine unity, solidarity, and indestructibility of Scripture in the most expressive and decisive way. For what could so decisively and significantly declare and require the trueness, reliability, and Divine authority and inviolability of God's Written Word as to say that the Incarnate Word of God came to fulfil it? and that one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from it till all be fulfilled (ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται)? or, as in Luke, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (πρὸς εἶν). For surely it was impossible for Christ to fulfil what was false, or wrong, or a mixture of false and true, right and wrong, as the opponents of the Bible claim, and the teachers of its erroneousness imply. He could only fulfil what was true, and right, and good, and God-given. And the fact that, as He says, He came down from heaven not to destroy, but to fulfil it, and thereby to do His Father's will by fulfilling His word, declares and requires that Scripture should be so, and that it is and must be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. The further fact that He solemnly declares that one jot or one tittle of it shall not pass away while heaven and earth remain or till all is fulfilled, and that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than one tittle of it to fail or become void,¹ is surely the most absolute and decisive way in which language or God Himself could express and declare its thorough truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, Divine origin and authority, literal sacredness, absolute inviolability, and eternal indestructibility even in the minutest points. For the jot (ἰῶτα, English *iota*) is not only a single letter, but the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet (י), and the tittle

¹ Robinson's *Lexicon of the N. T.*

(κεραία) are the little turns or strokes completing and distinguishing the letters (such as כ (K) and ב (B), ה and ה).¹ To make this declaration of the minute truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, and literal inviolability of Scripture, even the O.T., the more absolute and emphatic, our Lord says, that not one of these tiniest turns or points, the veriest fragments of letters, can pass (become void) till heaven and earth pass away,—the “one” (μία) being repeated with each, and the “not one” advisedly used signifying “not even one.”²

Observe, too, that most expressive and decisive “no wise” (οὐ μὴ),³ a double negative, in order to be all the more emphatic and absolute; for it is both an objective and a subjective negative, οὐ being a direct negative as a matter of fact, and μὴ being a conditional or supposed negative, denying not only as a fact, but as a conception or possibility; and both together making the strongest and most absolute negative possible, and becoming thus the most certain and decisive positive assertion of the truth and inviolability of Scripture in its literal precisian entirety. The same expression is used by Christ of the moral certainty that whosoever giveth even a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose his reward (Matt. 10⁴²); of the spiritual necessity of being converted and becoming as a little child in order to enter into the kingdom of God (Luke 18¹⁷); of the Divine assurance that “him that cometh unto Me shall in no wise be cast out” (John 6³⁷); and of the absolute certainty, because of its moral impossibility, that there shall in no wise enter into heaven anything that defileth (Rev. 21²⁷). All this enduring stability of God's Word is strengthened by the use of that strong and majestic utterance that heaven and earth shall pass away before one iota or point of it can pass or fail till all (πάντα) be fulfilled. And the reason introducing this sublime declaration by, “verily I say unto you, for,” that Christ gives for men not thinking that He came to destroy the O.T., but to fulfil, is its eternal certainty, absolute indestructibility, and Divine origin, authority, and inviolability. The words to “fulfil” (πληρῶσαι) and “fulfilled” (γένηται) are most significant and decisive here. The first denotes to complete to full development, to expand and perfect, to fill out or up to the

¹ ἰῶτα ἐν ἡ μία κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου, ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται.

² See Winer's *Grammar*, p. 216.

³ *Ibid.* on οὐ μὴ, p. 216.

full.¹ And whether it be to fill out like the moon to full moon, or to fill up like the outlined picture to its finished form, or to develop to perfection like the immature members of a child to the maturity of full manhood, in every case it requires and postulates trueness and reliability in what has to be completed, expanded, and filled out to perfection by development. For it is surely patently impossible to develop the true out of the erroneous, the trustworthy out of the unreliable, the right out of the wrong. The very fact that He said He came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, was the strongest way of saying that the O.T. was true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority; for He thereby connects and identifies Himself and His lifework with it. The second "till all be fulfilled" makes this if possible still more absolute and expressive; for it denotes what is done, accomplished, and has eventuated in perfected form. So that the whole O.T. by being thus fulfilled in Him has been realised, actualised, and embodied in Him and His lifework in its perfect and ideal form, and in Him it lives anew, transformed and glorified. Thus His whole life was guided and determined by it, rooted and sustained in it, and in Him and His whole lifework it had its highest realisation and living embodiment. All this demonstrates from the meaning of His own very words that the Bible is true, trustworthy, and of Divine origin and authority—the Word of God, the Incarnate Word becoming the living form of the written Word of God. So that if He is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, then it is so also, and *vice versâ*. Therefore, if it is not so, He was mistaken and misled as to His life and mission. His life becomes an error and a delusion, and His work a failure and a hallucination. And where, then, are we? and what is He?—for both we and He thought it was He who should have redeemed Israel, saved man, and glorified God by fulfilling Scripture!

Mark, too, how surely and inevitably He declares all this; He says it *negatively*, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets." He says it *positively*, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil,"—both negative and positive. He says it *comparatively*, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail,"—more stable than the most stable things in nature. He says it *specifically*, by example, "Whoso-

¹ See Meyer, Alford, Brown, Bengel, etc., *in loco*.

ever shall break one of these least commandments, etc., the same shall be called the least, etc.; whosoever shall do and teach one of them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven,"—thus making men's position depend upon their conduct as to the least points of Holy Writ. He says it *absolutely* of all Scripture, "*One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, etc., till all be fulfilled.*" He says it *relatively* in relation to Himself and His mission and His lifework, "*I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil*" the Law and the Prophets,—identifying Himself and His whole life-purpose and action with the fulfilling thereof. He says it *advisedly* to meet the circumstances and the anticipations of the time and audience, but for all time and all peoples;—to discourage the religious revolutionists who were looking to Him as a probable leader of a new religious and social revolution; to undeceive the pharisaical traditionalists, who either wished for His sanction of their Rabbinical encrustations and perversions of it, or watched for any suspected attacks or disparagements of it for which they might accuse and arrest Him; to encourage the devout Bible lovers, who trembled at and for the Word of the Lord lest Christ might in anyway depreciate it. To all these, and such like, He gives one clear, decisive deliverance, which settles all, to all, for ever, "*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*" He says it *Royally*, as the King at the solemn public inauguration of the Kingdom of God, when issuing the manifesto of the Messianic King. And He says it *authoritatively*, with all the Divine authority that is His as *the* Prophet of the Lord and the Son of God—one with the Father as God, "*Verily I say unto you,*"—the tone and claim of supreme legislative authority, as the Divine Lawgiver. He says it *imperatively*, implying that there was an imperative Divine necessity requiring Him not to destroy (*καταλῦσαι*) (dissolve or abrogate),¹ but to fulfil. *First*, because He came from heaven on express purpose to fulfil them; and to destroy would therefore be to defeat the very purpose of His coming—to frustrate the Divine mission for which His Father sent Him. *Second*, because the eternal certainty and Divine indestructibility of God's Word, more sure and abiding than heaven and earth in every jot and tittle, required Him as the Messiah to fulfil it, as, He says, by His *first* sublimely

¹ Meyer and Bengel, *in loco*.

solemn "verily I say unto you," prefaced by the "For," which gives this as the reason for His coming to fulfil it. There then, in every conceivable form of decisive and ineluctable absoluteness is the teaching in His very words, of very God upon the Word of God, declaring it to be "the Word of the Lord which liveth and abideth for ever"; and solemnly laying it down as the basis of His Kingdom at its public inauguration by Himself as its King. And he would, therefore, be a bold man indeed who would dare to question the truth or authority of it or of Him; for thus saith the Lord, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

WHAT THIS PASSAGE SETTLES: ATTEMPTED EVASIONS.

This great classical passage, then, settles finally and unquestionably that Christ holds and declares the Bible to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine origin, authority, and inviolability in its integrity. If Christ had purposely set Himself to exhaust the powers of language in putting that for ever beyond question, it appears impossible for even God Himself to have made it more decisive and absolute than He has done in this cardinal Divine deliverance. This has been recognised in all ages both by the acceptors and the rejectors of the Bible claim, many even of those openly disowning His Divine claims and authority as a Teacher frankly confessing that no honest interpretation of His teaching here can conclude otherwise.

Most significant of the truth of this has been the feebleness of the attempted evasions of it by those who disown or ignore the Bible claim, which only confirm its ineluctableness. Two outstanding examples may suffice for all. Dr. Farrar says: "That our Lord's words had no such meaning is clear, since He set aside as null and void the greater part, if not the whole, of the Levitic legislation, criticising it even in an essential particular as a concession to human imperfection";—"partly supplemented and partly reversed."¹ Similarly, Dr. Briggs says: "Our Saviour's own discussions show such an interpretation to be impossible. He Himself changed the law of divorce. The greater part of the legislation was superseded once for all by Jesus."² Others say explicitly, without attempting to prove,

¹ *Inspiration: A Clerical Symposium*, p. 225.

² See Dr. Briggs, *The Bible, the Church, and the Reason*, p. 289.

what is implied in these, that the "I say unto you" passages immediately following Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁹ show that our Lord did not mean what His words unquestionably say!¹ Most irrelevant, untrue, and amazing statements these.

Let the following notes suffice:—*First*, that none of them even venture to assert that Christ's words, taken by themselves, do not plainly and indisputably declare this, that this is not indeed the only true or just exegesis of the passage, the obvious and only meaning of the words. On the contrary, this is owned and stated. Dr. Briggs says: "Our Saviour here teaches that He and His Gospel are not in conflict with the O.T. Scripture, but rather their complete and entire fulfilment. The jot and the tittle doubtless indicate the most minute details."² Dr. Farrar, writing of the Acts, says: "I have elsewhere tried to show that in *every instance*, and in the minutest particulars, the accuracy and trustworthiness of the narrator can be triumphantly vindicated."³ Therefore, themselves being witnesses, that is not only the meaning of His words, but the evidence of the facts. And yet—

Second, by fallacious *inferences* from other supposed facts or phenomena, they reject this claim of Scripture and of Christ; and by so doing they, first, contradict themselves; next, misconceive and confuse the issues; and, third, overlook and violate the first principles of Biblical exegesis and of all true scientific interpretation, by making their own inferences from other things—the alleged phenomena—decide questions of doctrine, instead of, and in the face of, the obvious and only meaning of the explicit passages treating expressly thereof, which are the only proper and direct evidence, all others being at best but secondary and confirmatory. Their criticism over-rides and vitiates their exegesis.

Third, what are these supposed phenomena by their inferences from which they seek to set aside, contradict, and nullify the solemn and decisive words of the Lord our God? This,—that Christ superseded as null and void the greater part of the Levitic legislation! As if *that* had anything to do with the question, or in anyway affected the truth of His words. He

¹ See, among many others, Dr. Clifford in discussion in *British Weekly*.

² *Ibid.* p. 289.

³ *Ibid.* p. 231.

did, indeed, supersede and terminate much of the old Law,—but how? Not by saying it was false and wrong, but by declaring it was true and right, and typical of Him and His work; for the type must have been true if the Antitype was. Not by destroying, but by fulfilling it in every jot and tittle; and thereby declaring and proving it to be true and good, for He could fulfil only what was so. He superseded it in fulfilling it, by completing, developing, perfecting it, and by accomplishing it in His own life and work. He finished it by fulfilling it in its entirety, through embodying it in Himself; and thereby realised and eternalised it in Himself and His Gospel. It vanished only when it had served its purpose in prefiguring and preparing for Him,—only in being transformed and transcended in Him and His full and perfect revelation; only when the perfect had come was the imperfect that prefigured it done away; but in order to do this it had to be true, reliable, so far as it went, else the prefiguration would have been false and the fulfilment fictitious or impossible. It passed away as passes the child into the man, the bud into the full-blown rose, the crescent into the full-orbed moon. It faded as fades the morning star into the light of the perfect day, as the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His beams. It died to live anew in Him for ever, in perfect form, in His final revelation. So that though heaven and earth may pass away, it shall never pass away. He thus most significantly declares and establishes its Divine origin, truth, authority, and durability in the most indisputable way. And one is amazed how anyone could think anything else. So far from contradicting His explicit words, these phenomena only confirm them in the most decisive manner; so that if the phenomena are facts, their inferences are fallacies and confusions.

Fourth, and what are the other alleged facts which are supposed to imply that Christ's words do not mean what they explicitly say, but the opposite, and by which He is assumed to have so far discredited and reversed the teaching of the Scriptures He came to fulfil, and His own teaching in this foundation passage? Dr. Farrar and Dr. Briggs mention only the law of divorce, the one saying He criticised it, the other that He changed it. As this, however, will come in among the "I say unto you" passages, which are all supposed to do likewise, we shall examine them together.

THE "I SAY UNTO YOU" PASSAGES.

1. Who can seriously or reasonably imagine that our Lord could say anything contrary or derogatory to the O.T. immediately after such a solemn and decisive deliverance as to its Divine origin, truth, and perpetuity, and the place and glory it was to have in the N.T. economy by its being fulfilled, perfected, and embodied in Himself and His Gospel? The very idea of His giving such a glaring contradiction of His own very words, uttered to the same people at the same time, almost in the same breath, is an incredible hypothesis, and demands such astounding credulity as makes any difficulties of the Bible claim sink into nothingness.

2. His words here are directed, not against the O.T. or the Law at all, but against the perversions, corruptions, and traditional misinterpretations and encrustations of it which unspiritual rabbinical expounders had attached to it, and secularised it by. So the great body of the best commentators hold, as is well expressed by Dr. David Brown: "It seems as clear as possible that our Lord's one object is to contrast the traditional perversions of the Law with the true sense of it as expounded by Himself."¹

3. As a matter of fact the quotations are mostly not from Scripture, but from traditional teaching; and even when like Scripture, what He condemns is not the Scriptures He gave and came to fulfil,—which would be self-condemnation,—but the Pharisaic perversions and misapplications of them.

4. What Christ in most cases does, is not to correct, far less condemn, but to unfold, develop, complete, and confirm; but never to reverse or discredit the O.T. teaching, as is manifest on inspection in five out of the six cases dealt with.

5. The one case of which the opponents of the Bible claim make most is "an eye for an eye," etc.—the law of retaliation (*lex talionis*), as it is called. But this, which is substantially as in the O.T., is not really condemned by Christ. He only refers to it to teach His higher doctrine of the non-resistance of evil for His disciples,—a doctrine which, as is well known, unbelief has turned against the truth of the Christian faith and the authority of Christ's

¹ *Critical and Explanatory Commentary*. See also Meyer, Alford, Bengel, Tholuck, Calvin, etc.

teaching. It has been declared to be an impracticable ethic, a Utopia, and the teacher of it a visionary,—a doctrine which, as applied by Tolstoi and others, seems unreasonable and unworkable. But our Lord never meant it to be so used in absolute literality, as His own action on His trial and otherwise shows (John 18^{22, 23}). What is, however, implicitly condemned here is the traditional perversions and misuse of it to justify personal revenge, private retaliation,—taking into our own hands the application of a law—a righteous law—of public justice, which should be administered only by public judicial authority. It was also probably meant to lead Christians to eschew resorting to the tribunals of public justice for reparation of injuries, but rather to bear them meekly as He did, and not return the same,—though this is by no means in every case precluded. And certainly as a principle of public justice it is not wrong but right; yea, it is the law of God from the beginning; best exhibited perhaps in the law, "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall His blood be shed"; which is the law and practice of the nations of Christendom till this hour.

6. The law of divorce, brought in under the seventh commandment, which is the only one mentioned by Dr. Farrar and Dr. Briggs, is not a correction, or criticism, or change, far less a reversal of the marriage law, as given in the O.T.; but a reassertion and re-enforcement of it from its original constitution at man's creation, as recorded in Genesis. That law was held so sacred and inviolable that any violations of it by adultery warranted divorce. Our Lord here, while emphasising the binding sacredness of the marriage tie as originally given, as explicitly as Moses sanctions divorce for conjugal infidelity; and this is the only ideal held up in the Holy Scriptures (Deut. 24¹). Whatever other traditions, as to what Moses may, because of the hardness of their hearts, have temporarily permitted in extreme cases, had become current, and whatever misinterpretation of the Mosaic law of divorce were attempted to be forced upon it as given in Scripture, it still remains true that the above was the only ideal of the marriage tie designed by God or held up as the standard in the O.T. And if there were other causes for which Moses may, in exceptional cases, to prevent greater evils, have temporarily permitted divorce, it would be not as revealer of the will or ideal of God, but only as judge or ruler in a civil case; as

many of the civil laws of Israel were only temporary and imperfect, as the times and the O.T. economy were. But no such relaxation of the marriage tie is given as the ideal. And what our Lord here condemns is again the Jewish traditional perversions of the original marriage law; because divorce had become so common for the most arbitrary reasons, and on the most frivolous pretexts,—one influential rabbinical school (Hillel) permitting it for other and trivial causes, which led to great laxity in the marriage tie, and serious social evil. Our Lord thus makes the marriage law, as He also makes the sixth, seventh, third, and ninth commandments, more stringent and searching, and gives them a deeper spirituality, a vaster scope, and a more abiding obligatoriness than was prevalent, or known before. See Appendix.

7. The last case mentioned by Christ shows clearly that it was the perversions and misapplications of the O.T. law He condemned when setting forth His higher ideals for His disciples. For He also quotes as said to them of old time, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and *hate thine enemy*," where the last clause is a perverse addition to the Bible law of love *to our neighbour* (Lev. 19¹⁸), which vitiates the whole;—as the Jews practically did by limiting the first part to Israel, and applying the last to the Gentiles. So far is this, as quoted here, from being the teaching of the Mosaic law, it is directly contrary to it (Lev. 19¹⁸) and to the whole O.T., as Christ, who should know best, declares when He sums it all up in the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: *for this is the law and the prophets*" (Matt. 7¹²). Even as elsewhere He sums and embodies it all in the one Divine law of love—love to God and love to man—, significantly and authoritatively declaring, "On these two commandments hang *all the law and the prophets*" (Matt. 22⁴⁰); and thus giving a new and decisive reason why heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled; for love, like God, is eternal (1 John iv. 8).

It is thus made evident that *in not one case* is there any real ground for questioning or modifying the full force and finality of the plain and necessary meaning of our Lord's weighty words in this great decisive deliverance declaring the truth, trustworthiness, and Divine origin and authority of Holy Scripture. On the contrary, when properly interpreted, they all support and

establish that deliverance. So that it stands out in all its solemn majesty and Divine absoluteness declaring and endorsing the Bible claim to be, in its entirety, the Word of the Lord which liveth and abideth for ever. Here, then, the statement of Christ's teaching might end; for the proof is closed and conclusive for the Bible claim, and should be final and authoritative to all who own His Divine authority as a Teacher. But this is after all the merest fragment of the evidence, which is all of a similar character, and to the same effect. As we have, however, given this cardinal passage in such fulness, and shown its decisiveness, a concise summary of the rest round this centre will suffice.

OTHER EXPLICIT PASSAGES—JOHN 10^{24, 35}.

John 10^{34, 35}, "The Scripture cannot be broken."¹ Following the lead, and confirming the testimony, and exemplifying the principle of the great classical passage above, note, next, this specific, crucial passage, which gives a striking, practical illustration of the truth of the Bible claim, declared with a sharpness and decisiveness difficult to equal, and impossible to excel. It carries peculiar force and weight from its intrinsic character and special circumstances. It is free from all uncertainty or ambiguity. There is no question about the genuineness of the text, or dubiety as to its meaning or application. It exhibits, with a singular pointedness and perspicuity, our Lord's conception and doctrine of Holy Scripture by a specific, decisive example; and there is nothing that so surely indicates and expresses a teacher's real view and belief as precise examples,—especially coming as it does after such a clear, didactic declaration of His general doctrine as is given above. Besides, the circumstances that evoked the deliverance and the purpose of its utterance increase its weight and assurance. And the nature of the statement itself, and the manner in which it was brought in, impart a peculiar precision and finality to it. Our Lord was advancing His Divine claims. The Jews, recognising this, charged Him with blasphemy, "because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." To justify His claim to be the Son of God, He quotes from Ps. 82⁶, where judges or magistrates as official representatives and commissioned agents of God are called gods, and says, "Is it not

¹ Καὶ οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή.

written in your law, I said ye are gods?" "If He called them gods to whom the Word of God came,—(if those earthly representatives receive this sacred and Divine name)—say ye of Him,—(the heavenly Messenger),—whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?" And it is just in the heart of this great statement, urging this Divine claim, that He makes this direct and decisive deliverance about Scripture—"And the Scripture cannot be broken (*αὐθῆναι*)" (loosed),—which is so full of far-reaching significance. It is an explicit passage directly declaring the indissoluble authority of Scripture. It possesses this indestructible character, because it is the God-breathed embodiment of God's Revelation for man's salvation. As Olshausen has well said, "The Scripture as the expressed will of the unchangeable God is itself unchangeable." And this inherent indissolubleness, this Divine indestructibility, is here by Christ predicated of all Scripture—of the God-breathed Book as such. For it is because Scripture as such cannot be broken that this particular passage—this single word of it (*θείου*)¹—cannot be broken; and, therefore, its truthfulness and Divine authority endure, as the Word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth for ever. To Him it must be true, since it is in the Bible. It is because to Christ all Scripture was the Word of God, of Divine origin, truth, and authority, that He defends His Divine claim by it with such assured confidence, and here actually upholds His claim to be the Son of God even upon a single word of it. The manner in which this statement is introduced, too, gives it a peculiar weight. It is a clear and direct declaration, by the lips of Incarnate Deity, of the Divine truth and indissoluble authority of Scripture as such. But it is also brought in parenthetically (as most hold), or at least as an auxiliary and unquestionable truth, to uphold the chief doctrine of the whole passage,² not as the main, but as a conclusive, indisputable support to it; for the argument for this is founded on it. It is, in fact, brought in by the way as a postulate, like an unquestioned and unquestionable axiom in a demonstration, which finally proves the proposition, and ends controversy, by completing the demonstration. So that it has all the peculiar force of a direct passage, introduced by the way as a recognised postulate,—the meaning of which is clear, the truth of which is cer-

¹ Heb. *אֱלֹהִים*.

² See Meyer, Godet, Ewald, etc., *in loco*.

tain, and the authoritativeness of which is owned by all concerned ; for the Jews as well as Jesus held the finality of Scripture on all religious questions. The Divine decisiveness of this passage is crowned by duly appreciating the significant expressions used. Our Lord by quoting this passage from the Psalms as “ written in your Law,” shows that the title “ Law ” was applicable to all Scripture, and that it all had the character of law as the written expression and embodiment of God’s will.¹ And it is as such that He declares of it that the Scripture cannot be broken (*λυθῆναι*)—cannot be loosed, dissolved, abrogated, or violated.² So that by the specific words purposely used He declares not only the truthfulness and Divine authority, but also the unity and *solidarity*, with the consequent indissolubleness and inviolability of Scripture. It is one, Divine, inviolable whole—the God-breathed Word, and will, and law of God ; which cannot, therefore, be broken, impinged upon, or violated in one part, or word, or particle, without it being broken as a whole,—like a law broken in one point becoming a broken or violated law (as in St. James 2¹⁰), or like a vase broken in the tiniest fragment becoming a broken vase. And, finally, this validity, indissolubleness, and inviolability of Scripture in truth and authority, is necessary and Divine. That “ *cannot* (*δύναται*) be broken ” expresses a moral and Divine impossibility. It is impossible for Scripture to be broken, dissolved, or rendered void, because it declares the will, and embodies the purpose of God ; and because it is inseparably connected with, and prefigurative of the character and work of the Incarnate Word ;—Who, therefore, in the fulness of time, came not to destroy but to fulfil it ; and placed it on a level in truth, authority, and perpetuity with His own words, by declaring of both equally that heaven and earth should pass away before one item of either should pass away or fail.³ This passage is thus of great value and Divine decisiveness ; especially because it shows that Christ held the language as well as the thought to be true and of Divine authority ; and, therefore, founds a great argument, establishing His own Divine claims upon a single word of it.

¹ See Meyer, Olshausen, Bishop Ryle in Fairbairn’s *Bible Dictionary*, Introduction.

² See Robinson’s *Lexicon* and Winer’s *Grammar*.

³ Matt. 5¹⁸ 24³⁵.

REVELATION 22^{18, 19}.

Rev. 22^{18, 19}, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." These are the words of Jesus' last message to men, as given by Himself at Revelation's close. And although they refer immediately to this particular book, they are applicable equally to Scripture generally. For none of our present opponents will deny that whatever is here predicated of the Apocalypse is at least equally predicable of the other books of the Bible—specially of the N.T.; because no one can reasonably contend that it holds a higher place as to truthfulness or authority than the others; especially as is well known, it is one of the books whose canonicity was for some time disputed, that its text is perhaps the least satisfactory in Scripture, and that it is in its substance the most mysterious.¹ And besides, it joins itself with the O.T. writings and writers as simply co-ordinate authorities, and it only uses similar words of itself to those used by other Bible books about themselves and Scripture generally. Nevertheless, these words by which God's last message to men is so solemnly closed, are remarkably impressive and decisive. As Revelation opened in the Pentateuch amid the grand and awful solemnities of Sinai, with the vision of God and the sound of the trumpet loud and long, summoning Israel to hear the words of the Lord their God, and as Moses was ordered to write the words in a book and to place them beside the Ark of the Covenant for a testimony of blessing to the obedient, and of cursing to the disobedient;—so Revelation closed in the Apocalypse by similar solemnities and directions in the vision of a glorified Redeemer, and the sounding of the trumpets amid the overpowering glories and revelations of Patmos, as the Risen Christ appeared to His servant John, and directed him to write His words and visions in a book, opening with a promise of blessing for those who read and keep the words, and closing with the threat of an awful curse upon any man who will dare to add to, or take away from "the

¹ See Westcott on *The Canon of the N.T.*

words of the book of this prophecy." Words so solemn and sanctions so awful surely these as may well make all men tremble at the Word of the Lord, and lead the boldest to pause and ponder before daring at their peril to deny the truth, or dispute the authority, or assail the inviolability of the words of that Divine, God-breathed Book so absolutely authenticated, and so solemnly sealed from its opening in Genesis to its close in the Apocalypse, by the very words and the most awful sanctions of Incarnate God in the name of the Eternal Godhead. For the whole Book is given as the Revelation of God, as this closing part of it is called "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" (1¹), and as Paul's part of it is also called and declared to be "as it is in truth the Word of God?" (1 Thess. 2¹³). And the words of the Apocalypse, like the Pentateuch and other inspired writings, are repeatedly said to be written by the express command of the Lord because they are true, "Write : for these words are true, and faithful" (21⁵), and Divine ; "Write : for these are the true sayings of God" (19⁹). And the whole Scriptures, O.T. and New, are, by the express authority of the Lord, placed and bound together as of co-ordinate truth and authority, as the Word of God, by these significant words, "These sayings are faithful and true, and the Lord God of the *holy prophets* sent His angel to show unto His servants" these things (22⁶). And the Divine inviolability of all is declared most absolutely and most awfully in the solemn and majestic words quoted above, which so impressively close and Divinely seal at once the Apocalypse and the whole written Revelation of God (22^{18, 19}). These last utterances of our Lord are so decisive in themselves, and so impressive from their position, and so supremely authoritative in their Divine Deliverer, that it seems impossible to conceive how language could more explicitly express, or God Himself more solemnly declare, than He has there done, the thorough truthfulness, Divine authority, and absolute inviolability of Holy Writ,—the words by which every man should rule his faith and life. They are, in fact, the solemn attestation and Divine sealing of God's Book by Incarnate Deity in the name of Godhead. For they are given as the very words of Christ, and are also by Him declared to be : "What the Spirit saith unto the Churches," and the whole book is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God (the Father) gave Him, and He delivered, "even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 1¹ 2²⁷).

And finally what gives peculiar weight and finality to these great and decisive passages is that the first is given at the beginning of His public ministry in formally laying down the laws of His Kingdom at its solemn public inauguration ; the second, in the midst of His active teaching, when His Divine claims were denounced as blasphemy by the religious teachers, and He founded His defence and proof of them with absolute confidence upon a single word of Scripture ; and the third, with all the connected passages in Revelation, after the close of His earthly life when He had ascended to glory, and knew everything as perfectly as man and God could ever know, and yet taught precisely the same strict doctrine of Scripture as during His earthly life ; so that if He ever was, or is, or shall be, infallible and authoritative in His teaching, the Bible is in its integrity true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority—the very and the veritable “word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth for ever”—the words of which shall judge every man at the last day.

Here the evidence for Christ's teaching might end, for its endorsement and declaration of the Bible claim is established beyond dispute by proof conclusive to every reasonable mind, and found final by all honest interpretation. And were it possible to give any additional emphasis and solemnity to these, it is given in that sublime, majestic utterance, the grandest ever uttered by man or God, and that by which His words on this and every other subject are based, and crowned, and sealed, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” It seems superfluous, if not irreverent, to add anything to these words of Christ to show or prove that He held and taught as absolutely unquestionable the Divine origin, truth, and authority of all Scripture. But for the sake of showing how His life practice and habitual attitude accorded with His teaching, and how His way of regarding and treating Scripture contrasts with the spirit, usage, and attitude of many moderns, we summarise the following further proof.

MATTHEW 22²⁹, JOHN 17¹⁷.

In Matt. 22²⁹, when replying to the captious sceptical question of the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, He said, “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures,” in which He ascribes their error to their ignorance of them, and thus

most significantly teaches their truth. For surely what, if known, would keep from error, must itself be true. Here, too, he finds the truth of the resurrection of the dead on a particular form of the name of God, ay, on the present instead of the past tense of the verb. "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham (ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς Ἀβραάμ). God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." A great and unexpected truth is here brought out of the special form of expression used, in which the slightest variation would have destroyed the basis of Christ's argument. And as the original writer probably did not know this, and could not have known it without supernatural aid, there is here the clearest proof of supernatural inspiration in the words he wrote; and there is no reasonable explanation of our Lord's founding such a great truth except upon what was the infallible Word of God. Hence He says it was "spoken unto you by God," though written by the author of Exodus. Hence again He makes Scripture—God speaking in it—the supreme, final, because Divine judge of controversies. So also in His last great prayer on the eve of His death He uttered these pregnant words, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, *Thy word is truth.*"¹ The word here is unquestionably the Written Word; and thus in the most solemn circumstances, in the supreme crisis of our Lord's life, when alone with God, and on the verge of eternity, He teaches: *first*, that Scripture is the Word of God; *second*, that it is true, or more expressly truth (ἀλήθεια)—not *contains* truth, as many say, but *is* (ἐστι) truth—not partly true and partly untrue, not a mixture of truth and error, as so many now proclaim who call Him Lord, and yet believe not what He says, not even what He prays; *third*, that since it is truth and the Word of God, it possesses Divine authority. What was specially said of the Apocalypse above, "These are the true sayings of God," is here said roundly of Scripture as a whole—"Thy Word is truth."

THE "IT IS WRITTEN" PASSAGES.

The passages in which the phrase "It is written,"² or its equivalents, is used by Christ are many, and show the absolute

¹ ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστι (John 17¹⁷).

² Matt. iv., Mark i., Luke iv.

confidence with which He ever holds and speaks of Scripture as the unquestionable standard of truth, and the infallible rule of faith and life. In the Temptation He uses the expression three times in quoting from Scripture to answer Satan. The Temptation was the first conflict of Christ immediately after consecration to His public work, and He entered it with the sword of the Spirit, and overcame every assault of the tempter with the Word of God. And when Satan barbed his second temptation by a garbled, perverted text, Christ replied by simply quoting another which exposed the perversion; and by a third, which rebuked the tempter, and hurled him vanquished from the conflict, smitten by the Spirit's sword. What a unique honour Christ thus puts on Scripture by His own implicit submission to it as a man, by giving it alone the supreme place of authority in the controversy between Satan and Himself, and by making appeal to it final in the conflict. He practically illustrates its Divine truth, authority, and power. He declares the Divinity of it in every word as proceeding from the mouth of God, though really written by man. And a single text of it is to Him of more value and weight than all the kingdoms of the world, constituting a supreme and final reason for faith and obedience, and resistance of temptation, simply because it is found in Scripture, which is to Him the Word of God.

As with Satan so with the Sadducees, as seen, He appealed to the Scriptures as the final and authoritative settlement of the controversy as to the resurrection of the dead (Matt. 22). So also with the Pharisees as to marriage and divorce (Matt. 19⁴⁻⁹), Scripture ends discussion,—the words in Genesis (1²⁷ 2²⁴) being held as equally true and authoritative with His own words, because of both being the Word of God. Similarly He silences them by a single sentence from Scripture (Ps. 110), proving therefrom His own Divine-human personality—the profound but all-important mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh—Immanuel; a mystery not likely known, at most not clearly known to the Psalmist, and therefore requiring Divine aid to express it in such terms as to form the sure foundation of such momentous truths. Further, He justifies His own and His disciples' ideas and practices as to the Sabbath by an appeal to Scripture as unquestionable authority (Matt. 12). He also explains their rejection of Him, as the stone which the builders despised, by

Scripture as the Divine Key to all such action ; and by one grand stroke declares the truth and Divine authority of three Bible books and prophecies, and shows the harmony, Divine unity,¹ and wisdom of all Scripture (Matt. 21⁴², Ps. 118^{22, 23}, Isa. 8^{14, 15}, Dan. 2^{34, 35}). He silences their censure of the children praising Him in the temple with a quotation from Scripture (Ps. 8²), in which the writer could not have foreseen that such a use would be made of it, and, therefore, the utterance must have been given by God (Matt. 21^{15, 16}). He justifies His own stern action in cleansing the temple of its profaners and profanations by an appeal to the supreme authority of Scripture. "It is written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer ; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21¹³, Mark 11¹⁷) ; and thereby proclaims the Divine authority of two of the greatest prophetic books (Isa. 56⁷ and Jer. 7¹¹). He answers a lawyer, asking the way to eternal life : "What is written in the law, how readest thou ?", and then and thereby declares it to be man's God-given guide to life and immortality. Finally, to the Jews, as seen, He defends His own Divine claims upon a single word of Scripture (John 10^{34, 35}), postulating its finality, and declaring its inviolability, which He could do only because, as He said, it was the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, both in its substance and its form, in its language as well as in its thought.

THE "THAT IT MIGHT BE FULFILLED" PASSAGES.

The passages in which "fulfil," "that it might be fulfilled," and the like, occur, where our Lord speaks of Himself and others fulfilling the O.T. prophecies, are numerous ; and supply, with the previous, a vast array of conclusive evidence for the Divine origin, truth, and authority of Scripture. And if to them are added those quoted or referred to by His apostles after His example, and by the inspiration of His Spirit, there is an immense mass of diversified and decisive evidence for the Bible claim, which is simply overwhelming in amount, and of the weightiest character. The opponents have never seriously attempted to answer this ; for it is absolutely unanswerable. It at least demonstrates the truth and Divine authority of Scripture, and the falseness and perilous-

¹ See Birks, *The Bible and Modern Thought*, p. 214.

ness of all teaching that questions these, unless Christ and His apostles were radically wrong in the burden, substance, and design of their teaching. Who could fail to be struck by the unquestioning confidence and Divine assurance with which our Lord ever speaks of Scripture, and of everything therein as unquestionably true and authoritative, simply because it is in the Word of God? Let a small selection suffice for illustration. Luke 4²¹. At the beginning of His public ministry in the synagogue of Capernaum He says, quoting from Isa. 61, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Here He not only recognises real prediction in ancient prophecy, and the Divine origin, truth, and authority of this prophecy, and implicitly of all prophecy; but He finds in it His whole official work as Messiah—prophet, priest, and king—in prophetic outline. And how could He more decisively attest the truth and divinity of it, and of the Book of which it forms a part? Matt. 11^{9, 14}. Speaking of His forerunner He says, "What went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. This is Elias, which was for to come." Here He teaches that the two last prophecies of Malachi, the latest of the O.T. prophets, are fulfilled in John the Baptist's coming; next, that all the prophets were God's messengers, John being greatest because of his nearness and special relation to Christ; and, further, that the whole O.T., under the title of the Law and the Prophets, was prophetic of Christ, even as He said elsewhere, "Search the Scriptures: for they are they that testify of Me" (John 5³⁹). If, then, the testimony of John, and the whole of the O.T. writers from Moses to Malachi, on to John, in an ever progressive revelation, testified of Christ and had Him as their burden, end, and substance, the Book which is the God-breathed embodiment of this must be true, trustworthy, and Divinely authoritative if He is. Luke 18³¹. On the way to Jerusalem to die, He said: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished," etc. So in Luke 22³⁷, specially emphasising, "He was numbered among the transgressors (Isa. 53¹²); for the things concerning Me have fulfilment" (τέλος ἔχει). Here the Scrip-

tures determine His life course even unto death; the Divine programme must be fulfilled, even though requiring His death among malefactors, "according as in the volume of the Book it is written" of Him: for "I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Ps. 40⁸). But surely the Book containing such a Divine obligation must itself be true, just, and Divine. Luke 21²², in His own prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment at the end of the age, He gives the Bible utterances as the explanation, "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled,"—Scripture thus supplying the true key to the interpretation of history. On the eve of the Passion His references to Scripture and its fulfilment are peculiarly frequent and pathetic, as if in the supreme crisis and deepest experiences of His life He could speak only in His Father's Word, or breathe save with His Father's name upon His lips. John 13¹⁸. Speaking of Judas the traitor, He says, on the night of His betrayal, "That the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me." Again, Mark 14²¹, "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of Him; but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed." John 17¹². Again, speaking to His Father as within the vail in His last great prayer, He says, "None of them is lost but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Here the treason of Judas is said, in three different connections, to be the fulfilment of Scripture, though the crime of man;—even as of the Jews' rejection of Him He said, John 15²⁵, "But this cometh to pass that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, They hated me without a cause." And the Scriptures here said to be fulfilled are not direct, specific prophecies, but indirect, and, as some would doubtless say, far-fetched references or applications. So that Christ in such cases implies that the character of the Divine Word is such that not only direct, but also indirect, and even dim and distant hints or suggestions in it are valid, and capable of diversified application. But what book save God's Word could with truth be so used? Matt. 26⁵⁶. In rebuke of Peter's rashness in the garden in using a sword for his Master's defence, Christ said as to available deliverance by angels: "But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Here the predictions of Scripture as to His death are recognised by Him as

constituting a moral necessity for His non-resistance, or not seeking deliverance either by sword or angelic power; because His Father's Word expressed to Him His Father's will, and led Him in submission to that, to say, "The cup that My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18¹¹). And although He protested against the wrong the Jews did Him, as in Mark 14^{48, 49}, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords to take Me?", yet recognising the authority of Scripture, because the Will of God, He quietly submitted, saying, "But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." Was there ever such absolute surrender of a will to the Written Word of God? And yet it was made by Him who was, though real man, "True God of True God, Light of Light Eternal," and it was made simply because Scripture was recognised by Him to be the Word and Will of God. And when, after His seizure by the soldiers, He freely delivered Himself up to the predicted death for us all, and then, "All His disciples forsook Him and fled," His own prediction of that night, and Zechariah's given centuries before, were at once fulfilled; as He said, "All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Mark 14²⁷). Their desertion of Him, and their own dispersion, were thus a literal fulfilment of the words of the Divine Book.

So that the Baptist's testimony and His own preaching, Judas' treason and Peter's rashness, the Jews' rejection and the disciples' desertion, His path in life and His experience in death, were all in fact, as they were in purpose, that "it might be fulfilled, as it is written" in the volume of the Book. And when Matthew sums up the whole history of the Passion in these apt words, "All this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled," he only does in general what Christ did in detail—only follows strictly the example of the Master; and did so by His authority and by the supernatural power of His promised Spirit. Consequently, if He was right and authoritative in thus quoting and interpreting and ever ascribing truth and supremacy to Scripture, so are the disciples; and if they are not, neither is He, for they did simply what He did and taught, and by His Spirit enabled them to do.

CHRIST'S ACTIONS AS WELL AS HIS UTTERANCES RULED BY
SCRIPTURE.

His actions, too, as well as His utterances, show how thoroughly Scripture ruled, guided, and sustained His whole life and work. Hence His teaching by parables is, both by Him and His disciples, explained by Scripture prediction, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" (Matt. 13^{13-15, 34, 35}, John 12^{38, 39}). His miracles of healing, also, are ascribed to the necessity of fulfilling Scripture (Matt. 8^{16, 17}),—an application and extension of meaning being given to Isaiah's words, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53⁴), which were not known to or anticipated by the prophet ; and, therefore, required supernatural inspiration to secure the proper expression of the prophecy. His withdrawing from the multitudes, and His frequent charging of the healed not to make His miracles known, are explained by the predictions of Scripture (Matt. 12¹⁵⁻²¹). His, on the other hand, triumphal entry into Jerusalem is attributed to the requirement of ancient prophecy. (John 12¹⁴⁻¹⁶). So that what He did and what He abstained from doing are attributed to Scripture requirement. Many of the pathetic details of His sufferings on and near the Cross are shown in most striking precision to be the fulfilment of Scripture, such as the crowning with thorns, the scourging, the piercing of His hands, feet, side ; the vinegar giving, the mocking at the Cross, a bone of Him not broken, the parting of His raiment, the breaking of His heart, the burial in a rich man's grave. The very words He used on the Cross were largely the words of Scripture, and the fulfilment of them—specially "Eloi," "I thirst," "It is finished," and the last. All these, and many others, show in most minute and affecting detail how thoroughly all His life and death was rooted in and ruled by Scripture, and how thoroughly and precisely it was fulfilled by Him in countless points and minutiae, which all demanded and demonstrated a minutely true, entirely trustworthy, and Divinely-produced Bible.

CHRIST'S TEACHING ON SCRIPTURE THE SAME AFTER HIS
RESURRECTION AS BEFORE.

The crowning and most decisive declarations of our Lord as to the Divine origin, truth, and authority of Scripture are those

given after His resurrection. They are of precisely the same nature and purport as before, as we have seen in adducing references from the Apocalypse ; so that from first to last He has only one doctrine of Scripture. And the opponents of His teaching on it are thus precluded from the usual subterfuge of being able to put the later against the earlier teaching,—a fact that is fatal to all theorising about His humanity that would disown or question the authority or finality of His teaching on Scripture, and consequently of anything taught therein ; for it denies one inch of foothold for any such idea. But the fact that He lays such remarkable emphasis upon the Scriptures as giving the true key to His sufferings, death, and resurrection, after He had risen, and when, if ever, He would surely be absolutely infallible, and unquestionably authoritative as a teacher, gives a unique weight and decisiveness to His utterances. Besides, they were then made after the events had fulfilled the predictions and prefigurations of the O.T. ; and His great illuminative words then uttered as He came fresh from the triumph and radiant with the glory of the resurrection, shed such a flood of marvellous light upon the ancient Scriptures as made them new and wondrous revelations ; and filled His disciples' death-gloomed minds and sorrow-stricken hearts with joy unspeakable and full of glory ; and suddenly transformed them from perplexed and dejected men into such assured and radiant witnesses of the resurrection as revolutionised the world. The first of the great and decisive utterances was given on the way to Emmaus on the resurrection day, when, in answer to the bewildered and depressed disciples, He burst forth into the grieved rebuke, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ! ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory ? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24^{25, 26}). Here He declares : First, that all the prophets have predictions about Himself and His sufferings, and that this was the chief function and mark of the prophets. Second, that it was the darkness of their minds, and dulness of their hearts, that prevented them seeing and believing this. Third, that these prophecies created a moral necessity that He, as the Messiah, should suffer the very things He had suffered, because Scripture had foretold them ; so that the truth, authority,

and necessary fulfilment of it are made the moral basis of redemption. Fourth, that there is no path to glory for the Son of Man nor even to the Messiah, save through suffering. Fifth, that Christ, a suffering, and thereby a glorified Saviour, is foreshadowed, not only in the prophets, but also in the Law (Moses), and in *all* the Scriptures (*πάσαις*). Sixth, that we should believe *all* that the prophets and all the Scriptures have said ; and that only thus, and then, shall we fully know all that Christ is meant to be to us. And those who do not see or own this are still open to the rebuke of the Wisdom of God, "O fools," but with less excuse for their folly now ! Thus the truth and fulfilment of Scripture is the necessary ground and condition of our redemption, and it is only as we believe *all* that is in *all* the Scriptures that we fully know Christ, enter into the experience of all that God has in Him for us, and grow up into the stature of perfect men in Christ. Was it possible even for God Himself to have given more decisive attestation of the Divine origin and authority, truth and inviolability, of all in all the Scriptures than this ?

The second and supreme utterance on that ever memorable resurrection day was, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day : and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24⁴⁴⁻⁴⁷). In this, which was uttered before the whole assembled disciples, our Lord teaches : First, that in all the well-known divisions of the O.T. there were predictions of His sufferings, death, and resurrection. Second, that there was a moral necessity for "the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the *third* day," even that detail, because "all things must be fulfilled which were written" in the Scriptures of Him. Third, that the gospel should be preached among all nations ; and that the whole gospel dispensation is based upon an imperative necessity arising from the faithfulness of God, that the Scriptures must be fulfilled. Fourth, that Christ opened His disciples' minds that they might understand the Scriptures in this light ; and that all who are taught of Him come

to understand this. And surely this is the most decisive and absolute way in which our Lord could declare that the Bible is true, trustworthy, and of Divine origin and authority—the very Word of the Lord which liveth and abideth for ever. And when to these are added Christ's words about it as spoken from heaven after His ascension, in the Apocalypse quoted above, we have as complete a demonstration that to Christ in His resurrection glory and perfection of knowledge, all Scripture was as truly the Word of God as though it had been uttered by the voice of the Eternal from the heavens, or graven by the finger of God on the sides of the everlasting hills.

THE GENERAL NAMES AND TITLES GIVEN TO THE BIBLE.

This, which is proved by the explicit passages above, is confirmed by the general names or titles given to the O.T. as a whole, which supply evidence directly applicable to all parts of it. Some of the passages adduced above apply directly and in the first place only to particular portions of it; and although from the manner in which they are quoted and used, as well as from their forming an integral part of the one unique collection of sacred writings recognised as *sui generis*, they are applicable by necessary implication to all,—yet it strengthens the conclusion to find passages with names and expressions directly and indisputably used of all the sacred writings. *First.* The most common name for the O.T. in the New is “Scripture” or “Scriptures,” with the equivalents or implications, “It is written,” “Have ye never read of it?” “How readest thou?” This title is used over fifty times in the N.T. of the Old, and with equivalents many more; and in every case, with one significant exception, it denotes the O.T. The exception is where Peter puts the Epistles of Paul on a level as Scripture with “the other Scriptures”—a name reserved otherwise for the O.T. writings:—thus by inspired authority are the N.T. writings placed as “Scripture” on a level with the Old, as equally the Word of God, because inspired by the same Holy Spirit. The title is often used by our Lord, and always in this strictly restricted sense by which the sacred writings are distinguished from all other writings as different in kind, and placed in a category by themselves as the Word of the Lord. Many examples of the use

of this title for the O.T. as a whole are given above ; and given when quoting or referring to particular passages it is as part of a well-known Divine, because God-breathed, whole ; and whatever in any case is predicted of it in one part or passage is applicable to all. And in every case the Scriptures are spoken of and used as the infallible and Divinely-authoritative standard of faith and life, which cannot be broken or violated in a single word (John 10³⁵), or pass away in one tittle (Matt. 5¹⁸), or be altered in one iota without judgment (Rev. 22¹⁹) ; which in every part has eternal life (John 5³⁹), because full of Christ and His redemption, and must therefore be fulfilled as it is written (Luke 22, etc.) ; and which should, therefore, be earnestly searched by all who wish eternal life by the knowledge of God in Christ (John 5³⁹).

Second. The titles "The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms," or "The Law and the Prophets," and sometimes "The Law" alone, are given to the O.T. as a whole, specially by our Lord, as seen above. These designations and divisions cover the whole O.T. as known to the Jews ; and whatever is predicated or predicable as to their truth and authority under any of these designations, holds equally of all ; for they are used interchangeably, and they all denote the same well-known collection of sacred writings. And they are ever treated and regarded as complementary portions of the one Divine Book, which embodies the will, expresses the love, and reveals the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ; which therefore, like God, is true, and just, and good, and everlasting—the Word of the Lord, which endureth for ever. Hence, in addition to all said above, our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, when stating the golden rule, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them,"—gave as the supreme reason, "For this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7¹²). And in answer to the lawyer who asked Him which was the first and great commandment, He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God ; and the second is like unto it : Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12²⁸⁻³¹) ; for on these two commandments hang all the "Law and the Prophets." Here, in brief, Christ declares that the ethical burden and substance of the whole O.T. is love—love to God and love to man. And since this is so, it must be true and good, authoritative and enduring, for love, like God, is eternal.

In this connection there are several utterances of Christ of special significance and weight. In Luke 16³¹ our Lord represents Abraham as saying in reply to the request of the rich man in hell, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Here the truth, Divine authority, and persuasive power of the O.T. are put in the strongest possible way, as being God's surest and most convincing testimony, —God's last and most powerful argument for faith and repentance, —the Written Word being declared to be surer and stronger testimony than would be the spoken testimony of one rising from the dead. Even as Peter says of it when alluding to the very voice of God speaking from heaven at the Transfiguration, "We have a more sure (*βεβαιότερον*) word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts" (2 Pet. 1¹⁹),—implying that God Himself can give no more sure and convincing testimony to the truth and reality of eternal things, till the realities themselves burst upon men amid the verifying light of the eternal day. Jesus says, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me." Here under the name of Moses our Lord puts the O.T. on a level, as true, trustworthy, and Divinely authoritative, with His own words, yea, if possible, as even more credible or more unquestionably accredited. "But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" where the contrast lies between Moses' *writings* and Christ's *words*, the Written Word being thus by God Himself placed, as it were, above the spoken Word of God; for it was the same God who spake unto the fathers by the prophets who in the last days of Revelation spoke unto us by His Son (Heb. 1¹). Hence our Lord often supports His own utterances by Scripture, as if they gave additional weight to them, as if He spoke under their authority, and as if they possessed in some sense a peculiar and unique authority. In Matt. 22 He says, quoting from the 110th Psalm as one of the divisions of the O.T. for the whole thereof, "How then doth David *in the Spirit* call Him Lord?" Here not only is His own Divine human personality and the great mystery of the incarnation founded upon Scripture, but this utterance, and by implication all Scripture, is said to be uttered "in the spirit,"—a most significant utterance. It reveals that to Christ the Holy Spirit is the real

author of Scripture, and that the root reason why He ever speaks with such profound reverence and absolute confidence of the truth, authority, and finality of Scripture, is because it is the veritable product of God the Holy Ghost. Similarly what John writes in Revelation is often declared to be "what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." So Paul says, "Which things we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, combining spiritual words with spiritual things" (1 Cor. 2¹³). Hence, as the Westminster Confession of Faith truly says, the supreme Authority and Judge of controversies in religion "can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures." In Rev. 2¹⁸ what John writes is said to be, "Thus saith the Son of God," "These are the true sayings of God." So that there is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost speaking the Words of God. Also in John 7³⁸.

SCRIPTURE IS IDENTIFIED WITH GOD, AND CALLED "THE
WORD OF GOD" BY CHRIST.

Speaking of the spiritual blessings that believers would receive and communicate, he uses this significant expression, "As the Scripture hath said," where Scripture is personalised, and identified with God, who is the speaker in the references. Just as in other cases, as Rom. 9, "The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh," where the actual speaker was God through Moses; and in Gal. 3, "the Scripture foreseeing," and saying, "In thee shall all nations be blessed,"—where it was God Himself who spoke this promise to Abraham. Thus our Lord identifies Scripture with God, and the names are interchangeable. Is it possible to conceive how God Himself could by any means have more decisively and variously taught the truth, trustworthiness, Divine authority, and inviolability of all Scripture? Appropriately, therefore, our Lord gives it a Divine character, and crowns it by calling it the Word of God! For those passages mean that, and necessarily imply it; nor is it possible adequately to express their content with any title less than that. Besides, it is impossible to account for our Lord's sublime utterances about it, profound reverence for it, or the Divine authority and absolute finality He ever ascribes to it, as well as His whole manner of using, regarding, and alluding to it, except upon the supposition that,

as Paul by the Spirit saith, "it is in truth the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2¹³). And, further, Christ expressly calls it by this name. In John 10³⁵, "If he called them gods to whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken"; where the name "Word of God" taken by itself is clearly given to the Written Word, and where the expressions "Word of God" and "Scripture" are manifestly and necessarily simply two names for the same Divine Book. Also John 17¹⁷, "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth," where "Thy Word" is patently the Written Word, the O.T. which they had ever by them, and His own words and revelations to them, which were brought to their remembrance and understanding by the Holy Spirit, and embodied in the N.T. Again, in John 5³⁸, "Ye have not His Word abiding in you: for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not," where the "His Word" is obviously only the O.T., as the Jews to whom this was said had no other Word of God; and to them this could patently have had no other meaning; for to them, as to Him, Scripture was the Word of the Lord. Besides, He here teaches that He as the Messiah is the burden of the Bible, and that therefore it must, like Him who fulfilled it, be true and Divine. And, further, He implies that had they truly believed that Word of God, they would have believed Himself, —identifying its truth and Divine character with His own. Hence in the next word He says, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me" (v.³⁹). And in Mark 7¹³ He said in condemning the Pharisees for putting aside the commandment of God by their tradition, "Making the Word of God of none effect by your tradition." In which, first, the contrast He makes is between the traditions of men and the Scriptures as the Word of God. Second, He calls the O.T. (two of the commandments of which they were violating in the case dealt with) "the Word of God." Third, what "Moses said" is twice called "the commandment of God," and "the Word of God." So that what His servants say by His Spirit is said to be what God said. Similarly in Matt. 4 He says in reply to Satan, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"; where what was written by man, and was a Mosaic utterance (Deut. 8), is said to have been uttered by God. Thus God not only inspires and makes Himself responsible for what is

spoken in His name, but also regards it as His own, and actually calls it His Word, and "the true sayings of God." God identifies Himself with it, and calls it His Word. Besides, He endorses the Book that the prophets called "the Word of the Lord"; and uses many equivalent expressions. So that in O.T. and New the words of the writers of Scripture are regarded and spoken of as God's words; and Christ attests and ratifies this for the O.T. and sets the prime example for it in the N.T., and for calling Scripture as a whole the Word of God.

CHRIST'S USE OF SCRIPTURE AND HIS HABITUAL ATTITUDE TO IT.

Not less decisive than His teaching in explicit and implicit passages, or than the titles or designations He gives the Bible, are His manner of using it, and His habitual attitude towards it. He quotes from or refers to all parts of it, without distinction, as equally true and authoritative,—alluding directly or indirectly to almost every book, and to every element and kind of thing therein indiscriminately as God's Word; nor is there proof of His quoting any apocryphal book. Sometimes the references are made with the names of the writers, sometimes without; at times when writers' names are given the words are afterwards ascribed to God, or the Spirit; often it is only "Scripture" or "it is written"; but in every case the Bible is held to be the standard of truth, and the Divinely-authoritative rule of faith and life. Its utterances, even its unobvious hints and dimly suggestive words, are ever held to be decisive of controversy. Appeal to it is to Him always final, and carries Divine authority. "It is written" settles every question; and "Have ye not read?" is the rebuke to all error, ignorance, or unbelief. And even when rebuking the Pharisees for making everything of the smaller and even trivial points to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith—He says, "These ought ye to have done, and *not to leave the other undone*"—great and small being to Him God's law, because in God's Word. He always uses it as God's Word, often appeals to it to settle controversy, reasons from it to establish His own claims, proves disputed doctrines by it, founds great truths upon single facts and words of it, and ever refers to it

with profoundest reverence. His whole teaching is rooted in it, steeped with it, ruled by it, supported from it, coloured through it, redolent of it, illustrated by it, and largely expressed in its language and imagery. No disciple of Browning or Tennyson, Milton or Shakespeare, Goethe or Dante, Virgil or Homer, was ever so saturated with their master's thought, or so steeped in their spirit, as Jesus was in Scripture. He found unexpected truths in it, discovered Divine depths in it, disclosed hidden meanings in it, and made unthought of applications of it,—unforeseen sometimes by the writers, and unperceived often by the readers; which revealed in it a Divine significance and scope extending far beyond mere human conception. This demanded not only Divine origin, but also such a Divine guidance and plenary inspiration as would secure that both in substance and in form it would truly express the mind of God as He wished. He ever assumes its unquestionable truth, postulates its thorough trustworthiness, declares its Divine authority, and proclaims its absolute inviolability. He freely, indiscriminately, and without distinction of parts, uses Scripture and all kinds of facts, things, and words therein as all equally and unquestionably the Word of God; and so speaks of it, uses it, and regards it as all undoubtedly true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, as to present a striking contrast to many modern critics and criticisers of it, who never seem to weary of exposing its supposed erroneousness and untrustworthiness, by their superficial, often flippant, and sometimes patronising references, and prevalent tone in regard to it. Without hesitation and with full assurance He refers, among other things, to the Fall, which some so-called Christian evolutionists deny, or evaporate as legend, as their principles require them to do: to the Flood, of which others question the truth, or regard as vindictive, and unworthy representations of God, though He sees in it the approved principles of God's moral government and of the future judgment: to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which some would-be Christian teachers regard as the superstitious beliefs of times of darkness,—though He sees in it the revelation of the righteousness of God against the workers of iniquity, which all history red with the footsteps of wrath on obdurate transgressors so awfully confirms: to Lot's wife being in judgment turned into a pillar of salt,—which many, calling them-

selves Christians, smile at as the crude conception of credulous ages, but which He refers to as true, to enforce the most urgent Christian duty in the prospect of His second coming: to the serpent in the wilderness lifted up to heal the wounded at God's gracious command, which rationalistic critics, and their flippant followers class among old wives' fables,—while He uses it to set forth the great truth of our redemption by His being lifted up for us upon the Cross—the supreme revelation of the love of God: and above all to that big bogle, Jonah in the whale's belly, which has evoked the ridicule of scoffing sceptics, and created something akin to consternation in some weak-kneed professing Christians; but which He who calls Himself “the Truth,” and God calls “the Faithful and true Witness,” three times referred to with the utmost unquestioning confidence, to set forth and enforce the great root facts of His own burial and resurrection, on which our Christianity is founded, and from which our salvation springs.

He also takes it as His own life guide, and makes it the guide for others. He often declares that His own life course is determined by it,—especially at the great turning points, and in leading life crises, and even in smaller matters, and minute details. As the evangelists tell us the place of His birth and upbringing, and the main scene of His ministry,—Galilee, as well as the coming, mission, and end of His forerunner, were foretold and settled by Scripture,—so He tells us that His own preaching in Nazareth, going up to Jerusalem to die, teaching by parables, working of miracles, the betrayal by Judas, denial by Peter, forsaking of Him by all, the seizure of Him by the Jews, condemnation by Jews and Gentiles, being put to death and rising from the dead—with many of the details of His whole life, work, and sufferings—were foretold and predetermined by Scripture, He Himself found these in it; and thereby learned what His life, work, and experience were to be; and, therefore, guided, did, and suffered all accordingly, because that Word expressed to Him His Father's will.

Further, by it, as the Son of Man, He sustained His own soul's life, nourished His spiritual nature, developed His human character, cultivated His mental powers, increased in all knowledge, grew in Divine wisdom, and perfected His whole moral and spiritual being up to the full stature of the perfect man

in Christ Jesus. He performed His life-work under its inspiration, fulfilled His life-mission by its staying power, defended His life-conduct by its examples, interpreted His life-experiences by its principles, resisted His life-temptations by its strength, nerved Himself in His life-crises by its watchwords, sustained Himself in life's most trying hours by its comforting anticipations, and passed at last peacefully into eternity, even through the anguish of the Cross, with its soothing words upon His dying lips. By it He lived, laboured, suffered, conquered, died, finished His work, and entered into His glory.

In short, His life, His work, His mission, Himself are so related to it and identified with it, and He and it are so indissolubly united that they stand or fall together—that if He is “the faithful and true Witness,” it must also, as He says, be the “true and faithful Word,”—“the true sayings of God,”—that if He is Divine and Divinely authoritative, so must it be. He is not only the antitypical fulfilment of it, but He is the ideal realisation of it, the perfect development of it, the living embodiment of it. The Written and the Incarnate Word are one; and Scripture is summed, perfected, personalised, and eternalised in Christ, and lives in Him in perfect human form for evermore.

WHAT IS SAID OF THE O.T. HOLDS *À FORTIORI* OF THE N.T.

All this holds, in the first place, and directly of the O.T.; but it holds also as truly though indirectly of the N.T. For the two are one—one united, organic whole; the one the growing root, the other the full fruit; the one the opening bud, the other the full-blown flower. Whatever truth or authority, therefore, the one has, that at least the other has. No one here contended with denies, or reasonably can deny, that the N.T. is at least as trustworthy and authoritative as the O.T. And every Christian holds, and must hold, that whatever truth or authority belongs to the O.T., that at least *à fortiori* belongs to the New. As a matter of fact, all who admit the proof for the O.T. admit it for the New. Therefore, after the demonstration given above, from the teaching of Christ, of the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of the O.T., we shall here give only the briefest outline of the argument for the N.T. claim,—mainly the statements and promises of Christ to His apostles, which also strongly

confirm all, with His solemn attestation of all Revelation at its close. Some draw an argument in favour of the co-ordinate truth and authority of the N.T. and the Old from their similarity of structure—the symmetry of Scripture,—there being in each a similar threefold division in a like order and proportion, namely, in both, first the historical, next the didactic and experimental, and lastly the prophetical. This may give some *à priori* support to the view that the Bible in its two great sections is really one book with one common, supreme Author—God; especially as the books were written and issued separately by many different authors, living in different ages, lands, and circumstances; and yet, when brought together, disclose this striking symmetry in structure,—which points to a common Divine authorship and authority. Others, with more force, reason from the organic unity of the Bible; and here undoubtedly there lies a cogent argument; for it is unreasonable to suppose that supernatural inspiration would be given for the production of the one and not of the other; especially for the completing and crowning portion. As the Revealer is one, and the Revelation one, so the inspiration must be one in truth and authority. A powerful argument may also be made from the great fact of the progressiveness of Revelation. For it is quite inadmissible to suppose that God would give special aid in the earlier part, and withhold it in the later, and higher, and consummating part. Sooner expect a great artist to expend his skill and pains upon the preparatory outline, or subordinate adjuncts of his master work, and leave uncared for the chief and crowning part—the centre and the glory of the subject. It would be caring for the means and neglecting the end, and thereby frustrating all. A forceful reason may also be adduced from the peculiar and supreme place of the apostles' work in the religion of Christ. They are never in the N.T. put on a lower plane than the prophets of the O.T.; they are often put on a higher; and they are first when mentioned together, even though reversing the historical order. And they had very special work to do. They had to be the writers of His life, the ideal, perfect life—the most wonderful and difficult to portray that ever was. Yet on the true and proper portraiture of it man's salvation depended. And when it is remembered that every event and action in that life was a revelation, quite as much as, often more than, His words,—for

the Sermon on the Mount, and the discourse in the upper room, and the divinest utterances that ever came from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake, must give place in revelation power to the blood drops of Gethsemane and the broken heart of Calvary,—it will be evident how essential it was to a true revelation of Christ and of the Father through Him, and of our salvation thereby, that supernatural aid should be given to secure this. Next, they were to be His witnesses, and the teachers of His religion; and how vital then it was that they should teach all, and only what, God wished, and *as* He wished to declare His mind, and to reveal Himself. And in whatsoever measure they failed or erred in doing this, to that extent precisely our knowledge of Him would be defective or wrong, and our experience of His salvation would thus be marred or vitiated. Further, they were to be the founders and administrators of His kingdom among all nations. Therefore, if the world was to receive the full benefits of this, it was necessary that they should be supernaturally guided at the outset, to order it and establish it in wisdom and righteousness from thenceforth even for ever. And as the functions and responsibilities of the apostles were undoubtedly higher and greater than those of the prophets, and as the new dispensation was much greater and far-reaching in design and issues, it follows necessarily that, if the O.T. writers were and required to be supernaturally aided to secure God's design, how much more *à fortiori* the N.T. writers? No doubt this is so far *à priori* but resistless reasoning from the less to the greater. But we have also our Lord's explicit teaching that John the Baptist was greater than any of the O.T. prophets; and yet that he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he; which, whatever else it meant, teaches that the N.T. is superior to the O.T. dispensation, and therefore also its chief agents; and implies that, if John was greater than the O.T. prophets, much more were the apostles of the N.T., the prime ministers of His kingdom.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE SUPREME AUTHOR OF SCRIPTURE.

It is when we come to the supreme Divine Author of both O.T. and New that we are on still stronger ground, and have clearer and more direct evidence of this at least co-ordinate

Divine authority. The O.T., while named in innumerable places "the Word of the Lord," and its equivalents, is throughout, and often in express terms, attributed to the Holy Spirit; as, for example, David says, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue," 2 Sam. 23²; and Zechariah near the close of O.T., speaking for the prophets as a whole, says, "The words which the Lord of Hosts sent by His Spirit by the former prophets" (Zech. 7¹²; see also 2 Pet. 1²¹). So the N.T. writers make precisely the same claim, and speak in identical or like terms of their words and writings being the words and the same work of the Holy Spirit as shown above. As Peter on the day of Pentecost urged when "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2⁴), John often writes, "What the Spirit saith unto the Churches" (Rev. 1-3, etc.). And Paul is specially precise and emphatic, "Which things we speak not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (2 Cor. 2¹³); therefore, "The things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Thess. 4²); and, therefore, "Stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our Epistle" (2 Thess. 2¹⁵); therefore, "Ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2¹³); and therefore, "He that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who hath given unto us His Holy Spirit" (1 Thess. 4²⁻⁸); and generally "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3¹⁶). The apostles used these and like words because they were constrained to do so by the Spirit—these utterances were the Spirit's utterances through them. They were also conscious that these words were true. They were even able to speak in other tongues, and the hearers from many nations understood them. And the Spirit sealed the truth of them by many miraculous gifts and works, and by the spiritual revolutions and moral transformations they made in the characters and lives of men—facts as sure as ever history or science recorded. And since the N.T. time was notoriously the dispensation of the Spirit by pre-eminence, and in altogether a unique way, if the O.T. writers required and received this supernatural power, how much more the N.T. writers, for that which was their highest and most permanent work!—the Divinest work that was ever given to men.

CHRIST HIMSELF GIVES THE CROWNING ARGUMENT FOR ALL
SCRIPTURE—PROMISES TO THE APOSTLES.

This brings us to the chief, crowning, and final argument for the, at least, coequal truth, trustworthiness, and authority of the N.T. with the O.T., as also for the Divine origin, truth, and authority of all Scriptures. It is climaxed, crowned, and conclusively closed for every Christian by Christ. Here, as everywhere else, all ultimately centres round Himself, and is finally settled by Jehovah-Jesus in the name of Godhead. It is the Lord Himself, and none less than He, who supremely declares and Divinely seals for ever the N.T. as well as the O.T.—the whole Bible—as the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever. This great and significant fact, to which we have before referred, that Christ Himself ever comes in as the chief and supreme, as well as the “Faithful and True Witness” at every crucial turn and vital point in the history of His Church, and the truths of Revelation, to give the unique weight of His own authority,—stands out with singular clearness and Divine decisiveness here, and gives a solemn pause, and constrains an eager silence as we ask, “What saith the Lord?” As much of what He says has been used in other connections before, the less is needed here. But we note this here, as well as all above, not merely to prove the co-ordinate authority of the N.T. with the O.T. writings and writers, but also as an important part of the proof of the main position—the Bible claim for both O.T. and New—; for as what is said of the O.T. holds *à fortiori* of the N.T., so what is said of the N.T. here and elsewhere, holds also of the O.T. as two parts of one organic God-breathed whole. *First.* Mark the significant position He holds in regard to both. He on earth attests and seals in the most solemn and absolute way with His own personal Divine authority the O.T., after it is closed, and near the beginning of His ministry (Matt. 5^{17, 18}), as well as often afterwards. And when the N.T. is closing, He from heaven speaks in its last book, and in its final words, and in a still more solemn and awful manner attests and seals the N.T. and the O.T.—the whole Divine Book (Rev. 22^{18, 19}). A most significant fact, as if to indicate in the most impressive way that this work of final attestation was too momentous for anyone to do but God. It is the King’s seal affixed by His own word and deed to the

Divine book in the name of Godhead. And this fact is all the more significant in the light of the further fact that the other leading divisions are similarly closed with special emphasis;—the law in its closing book and the opening of the next (Josh. 17); the prophets in its last book and chapter (Mal. 4); the Gospels with John's closing words (John 21²⁴); the Epistles of Paul with his last (2 Tim. 3¹⁶), of Peter (2 Pet. 1²¹ 3¹⁵), of John (3 John 1²). So, finally and most solemnly of all, by the Lord Himself in the last words of Scripture (Rev. 22^{18, 19}).

Second. His unique relation to both, as the connecting bond and substance of O.T. and New. He is the burden of the one, and the all in all of the other; and unites them together in a living Divine-human whole, like Himself, who fulfils and embodies them in a perfect personal form—one progressive Revelation of co-ordinate truth and Divine authority.

Third. He Himself, with what He was, did, and suffered, is the Divine-human personality that gives life and light and glory to the whole,—shining through the veil of rite and symbol, typical person and prophetic prefigurations in the O.T. more and more unto the perfect day. And He it is who shines forth in all the radiant glory of the Sun of Righteousness in noonday splendour in the N.T., filling and flooding it all with one blaze of heavenly light—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Therefore, both have the same character and purpose, and all is true and Divine, like Him of which it is the shadow and the written embodiment.

Fourth. His promises to His apostles, recorded by all the evangelists, are as clear, varied, and decisive as it is possible to conceive they could be, as is patent even on inspection. In comforting His apostles, as He sent them forth in prospect of being brought before rulers for His sake and the gospel's, He promises, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist" (Luke 21¹⁵); "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10²⁰); "It is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13¹¹). These words speak for themselves, and when taken along with Christ's general promise in sending them forth as His witnesses, "As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you" (John 20²¹), they promise the apostles the same equipment of the Holy Spirit to fit them for their work as He

had for His. And as He spake His Father's words ("for the words that ye hear are not Mine, but His that sent Me"), so they spoke His words and the Father's by the Spirit of their Father speaking in them—through them—"what the Holy Ghost saith." And since this was promised and given them for speaking in their own defence, which was largely personal and temporal, how much more *à fortiori* for what they by His Spirit wrote for His Church for all time ;—especially as like the prophets they wrote only "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,"—and as what is written has always in Scripture and to Christ (John 5⁴⁷) a higher place and greater weight than what is spoken. Hence Moses at the beginning of Revelation, and John at its close, were often specially directed to write, and so more or less all through.

In prospect of His departure, to cheer His apostles with the assurance of "another Comforter," who would fully fit them for all their work, and specially enable them to receive and convey a full revelation of His Gospel, He said, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16¹²⁻¹⁴). "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14²⁶). "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth . . . He shall testify of Me; and ye also shall bear witness" (John 15^{26, 27}). Here is, first, that Christ had many things to say unto them which they could not bear then because of their incapacity, or because they could not be understood rightly till certain great events happened which would give the proper standpoints,—specially His death and resurrection. Second, that Christ was to send them from the Father the Holy Spirit, who when He came would guide them into all truth. Hence He is twice named "The Spirit of Truth," and, therefore, whatever He will teach them and enable them to teach, must be the truth, and nothing but the truth. Third, He will not speak from Himself merely, but whatsoever He hears from

the Father and the Son, that shall He speak; and, therefore, what He teaches them, that they may teach all nations and ages (Matt. 28^{19, 20}), will be the Word of God of infallible truth and Divine authority. Fourth, He will bring all things to their remembrance that Christ had taught them while He was with them, and He would enable them to understand them in the new light as they had never done before,—they would indeed as they did in fact, after the resurrection and the descent of the Spirit, become new revelations of Divine truth. Fifth, that He would teach them things to come—give them, like the O.T. prophets, the gift of prophetic illumination, so that they would not only have a new light cast upon His old teaching which would make it a new revelation to them, and have many new truths taught them that they never knew before, but they would have revelations of future things made to them. And all these would be true, and of Divine authority, because from the Spirit of Truth, who only speaks what He hears from the Father and the Son. Sixth, all this, through the supernatural aid of the Holy Ghost, they were to have as permanent qualifications for the great and responsible work they were entrusted with as teachers, founders, and organisers of the Christian Church throughout the world;—and specially for that supreme part of their work—giving a written Revelation for all men in all ages. For, as to give this supernatural power to the prophets and not to the apostles, so to give it for their spoken words and defence, which was more or less temporary and personal, and not for their written words, which were to be a permanent and universal Revelation of God for man's salvation, would be contrary to all God's previous method of giving His Revelation, spoil and abandon all when the climax and crown were being reached, for which all the past had been preparing, and frustrate the very purpose and the grace of God in giving a Revelation.

CHRIST'S PROMISES FULFILLED AND SCRIPTURE FINALLY
SEALED BY HIM.

Fifth. And all this is what was actually realised, as shown above, on and after the day of Pentecost, “when they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance,” and went forward under His Divine inspiration

preaching and teaching the gospel, planting and organising Churches, and writing book after book,—Gospel and Epistle, History and Apocalypse,—until the last word of the Divine Book was written by man, and sealed by God as the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever, and has ever since been re-sealed by the Spirit of God in the souls of men as it quickened them into eternal life, and made them children of God.

Sixth. To give His apostles' words the greater weight and finality, He put them on a level with His own words in truth and authority; and identifies them with Himself as His own in these solemn and majestic utterances, "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10⁴⁰),—putting the apostles on a level with the O.T. prophets, as in Rev. 22⁶ and 2 Pet. 3². "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me" (Luke 10¹⁶). "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words . . . verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for" these (Matt. 10^{14, 15}). *Seventh.* And He puts the keystone into and the final Divine seal on the whole in these most solemn and awful words, with which He closes the Book of God, whose words will judge every man at the last day. Rev. 22¹⁸⁻²⁰, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

Such then is the teaching of Christ on Holy Scripture,—the clearest, fullest, sharpest, and most decisive ever given. And surely it *demonstrates*, if language, usage, and attitude can prove anything, *at least* that all Scripture is the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. The truth and authority of His teaching on this radical religious question may be and is denied now; but it is unquestionable that this is *His teaching*, and with this prime Bible claim He and His religion, and all authority in religion, stand or fall, as next Book shows.

BOOK II

IS CHRIST INFALLIBLE AS A TEACHER?



CHAPTER I.

THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE QUESTION, AND WHEN IT IS RAISED.

Ay, that is the question! That is the serious and almost alarming question which is inevitably and avowedly raised in recent controversies concerning Scripture in these last times. Who would have thought that such a question could have ever been seriously raised in the Christian Church? Who would have believed that the Divine authority, and infallible truthfulness of her Divine and adored Lord could have been called in question in this late age of the Christian era, by those professing to call Him Lord and Saviour? Who would have imagined, even a few years ago, that such a question could have now been discussed, or asked, by any in anyway calling themselves by His name and worshipping Him as their God? Time was, and that but recently, when the very raising of such a question would throughout Christendom have aroused a storm of holy indignation, and would have been regarded as blasphemy.

WHAT THE QUESTION PRECISELY IS AND RAISES.

For be it observed that the question is *not* whether Christ is God; for many who, while claiming the name of Christian, have answered that question in the negative,—such as the Unitarians and Arians, while denying His Divinity, they have yet owned

His supreme authority and maintained His inerrancy as a teacher. Nor is it whether Christ is our Redeemer; for many of various names who have denied this have nevertheless acknowledged the supremacy and infallibility of His teaching. But the question raised now is the deeper and more fundamental one: whether Christ, God or not, Redeemer or not, is to be regarded and deferred to as an infallible teacher in religious things—a teacher from whose decision there is no appeal;—whether His words, when truly ascertained and rightly understood, do not settle all controversies on the religious subjects on which He has spoken? And, further, if He is not the source and seat of authority in religion, then who is? what is? Is there, how can there be, any inerrant or real authority at all? These are the serious issues and vital questions raised in recent controversies which urgently press for a satisfactory solution.

HOW THE QUESTION HAS BEEN RAISED.

It is also most significant to observe *how* they have arisen. They have been raised not directly, but indirectly. They have not arisen from a direct study of these questions in the light of Scripture teaching; for long ago Scripture was supposed to be so clear and decisive on them that they were held to have been for ever settled on the authority of God speaking in His Word. But as this seemed plainly to oppose the theories of certain speculators on religious subjects, and the conclusions of a certain class of Bible critics, and as Jesus unquestionably appeared to stand most decisively by the Scripture against such critics and speculators, He seemed to block the way to the triumph of their views. Therefore He must be removed, and His absolute authority as a religious teacher questioned, and, if need be, set aside or qualified on such subjects. The truthfulness and inerrancy of His teaching, too, must be abandoned or modified, so as to accord with the supposed results of criticism, science, and philosophy. Thus this crucial question, which underlies and largely settles all other questions, is raised, not as a direct, but as a side issue, and is the natural result of men's supposed discoveries on other collateral subjects. Thus the Divine authority and infallible truthfulness of Him who is "the Truth" comes to be sacrificed to the supposed infallibility of the unproved

assumptions, oft-changing, contradictory results, and ever-varying exigencies of rationalistic criticism and speculative philosophy.

IF NOT INFALLIBLE, CAN HE BE DIVINE?

But directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, this most momentous question, on which all other questions depend, and by which they are largely settled, has been raised ; and having been raised, rightly or wrongly, it must be faced seriously and followed honestly, lead us where it may. We must therefore ask, "Is it not possible that the Church may have been mistaken in supposing her Lord to have been infallible in His teaching and Divine in His person?" for the denial of the one seems inevitably in the ultimate issue to carry with it the denial of the other, although the denial of the last has not always been followed by the denial of the first.

DOES APPEAL TO HIS OWN WORDS AVAIL?

And should appeal be made to His own words and claim, is this of much avail? For is it not part of the teaching of many of those with whom we are at issue that it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine with certainty what His words and claims were, on account of the uncertainty as to the origin, authorship, date, or authority of the Gospel records thereof? and because of the unreliability and alleged indefinite erroneousness of the Scriptures? Are we not, indeed, by the very theory deprived of the materials and conditions for the determination of this all-important question, or, indeed, of any important Bible doctrine whatever? Even if we should be able to gather from the general trend or substance of Christ's words, as recorded in Scriptures, what His teaching and claims were, and that He did claim for Himself Divinity and infallibility, may it not now be asked, without blasphemy or presumption, whether He Himself was not mistaken in His claims as to the infallibility of His teaching and the Divinity of His Person? After all, is it not possible that both the Church and the Church's Lord have been mistaken in this matter as in others ; and is not our faith, therefore, vain?

IS APPEAL TO HIS MIRACLES VALID?

And should it be attempted to avoid such a paralysing conclusion by adducing His miracles in support of His claims, is this line of defence to much purpose, or indeed available justly at all, to those from whose principles and contentions these tremendous consequences seem to follow? For is it not usually a prominent part of their teaching that the argument from His miracles in proof of the truth of His claims is behind the age and untenable, or at least inadequate, and of little weight and no real validity in the light of modern science and philosophy? Nay, on the contrary, does not the notorious fact that Christ so often appealed to His miracles, and laid so much stress on them in proof of His Divine mission and claims, serve to confirm the presumption that He was mistaken; since, according to these critics, this line of evidence and His way of laying stress on it, though perhaps impressive in a superstitious age, has in our enlightened time been discredited and become untenable? and, because never really valid, has at length vanished like a dream of the night before the infallible criticism and unique light of the nineteenth century!

OR TO FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY?

It is of equally little avail, even were it legitimate, for them to have recourse to the evidence for His claims from the literal fulfilment of prophecy. For is it not usually another part of their critical attitude and teaching, that prophecy, properly so called, and the prediction by supernatural inspiration of future events, was never uttered, but only sagacious "forecasts," sage prognostications from general principles and keen penetration? Therefore, there never could have been real fulfilment; while as for literal fulfilments of prophecy, why, according to them, such things never existed, nor ever could have existed, except in the vain imaginations of excitable men in an uncritical age, and were the pure products of ignorance, imagination, or superstition. The very possibility of literal fulfilment of prophecy is, on their theory of an indefinitely erroneous Bible, excluded; because that necessarily requires entire reliability and literal precision in the corresponding parts—like a mosaic or dovetailing. And

since the apostles, and even Christ Himself, speak and reason at length on many fulfilments of prophecy in Christ, and give numerous examples of literal fulfilments in the inspired writings of the N.T., it therefore, of course, follows that in these, which together form a large part of the teaching of Christ and His apostles, both they and He were mistaken; and must not our faith in them and in Him be again vain?

OR TO HIS INCARNATION AND RESURRECTION?

Even were they, to avoid the consequences, to retreat, as some of them would, to what has been called the very root and citadel of the Christian faith,—the incarnation and resurrection of Christ,—is it not for them, on their views, a futile retreat? For these are miracles, and according to them miracles have become discredited as evidences of Christianity. Besides, they have to be *proved* to be true. But how, on their principles and contentions, can the miracle of the incarnation be proved—say, in answer to Professor Max Müller, Tyler, and other religious evolutionists, who would relegate it to the category of legends common to the origin of all religions? As for the miracle of the resurrection, why, on their theory of an indefinitely erroneous record,—a Scripture unreliable and untrue in an indefinite number of things,—the proof of it seems impossible, or at least the alleged discrepancies and contradictions in the narratives of it, which their theory of Scripture requires them to admit, would seem to justify the refusal to receive the resurrection as a fact. Indeed, it is on this ground that many do reject it, and with it Christianity; as, for example, Professor Huxley, who, while declaring that he could not as scientist and agnostic reject it on the ground that miracles are impossible, yet says he could not receive it as true on the evidence—the alleged discrepancies and contradictions in the narratives bearing a most important part in the supposed unsatisfactoriness of the evidence on which Huxley rejects it. While as for Matthew Arnold, this he thinks warrants him to speak of “the fable of the resurrection forming on the Gospel page.”

If, then, Christ is not risen, or if the proof of His resurrection is insufficient, once more is not our faith vain or unwarrantable? And since the apostles and writers of the N.T. founded and

propagated Christianity on the fact and faith of the resurrection, then in this were they not dupes or deceivers; and, through this mistake or unwarrantable assumption of theirs, did they not mislead the world—the countless multitudes who in every age have lived and died in the faith of Christ? And since Christ Himself also believed in, and often foretold, His resurrection, and also told His enemies—the Pharisees—that when this event had, after their lifting up of Him, taken place, they would know that He was the Messiah and the Son of God;—then, if He did not rise, or if the proof of His resurrection was not sufficient to warrant belief in it,—as the theory of an indefinitely erroneous Scripture would permit and enable opponents to show,—then, once more, is not our faith vain, and Christianity untrustworthy, unwarrantable, and unreasonable; and agnosticism, or the rejection of the Christian faith, right, reasonable, and requisite.

DISTINGUISH CHRISTIAN CRITICS FROM ANTI-SUPERNATURALISTS.

Before stating or urging these consequences further, it is just and necessary to distinguish between the positive beliefs and standpoints of those who, from different reasons and even opposite motives, agree in results which, because all denying more or less the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture, raise the fundamental question of Christ's infallibility and authority, with such tremendous issues therefrom as have been indicated. Some religious evolutionists, like Professor Max Müller, Tylor, and others, boldly and avowedly profess to explain all religions, the Hebrew and Christian included, by mere natural evolution, and attribute the origin and development of all religious ideas to purely natural causes, and exclude supernatural intervention or Divine Revelation in their production altogether—in their case the question of the truthfulness of Scripture, or the infallibility of Christ's teaching in connection therewith, scarcely calls for serious consideration; for these are ignored and excluded by their fundamental position, distinctive principles, and speculative methods.

The rationalistic critics also, like Reuss, Wellhausen, Kuenen, etc., on literary and critical grounds exclude the supernatural, properly so called, and attribute the alleged misplacement of the

Law and the Prophets, and consequent misrepresentations therefrom arising, to the pious fraud of the priestly compilers, with a view to priestly aggrandisement. Were this a mere literary problem as to the transposition of the Law and the Prophets, it would be a legitimate question for Biblical criticism, which might be discussed within certain limits, and found to possess a large element of truth, quite consistent with the truthfulness of Scripture and the belief in the infallibility of Christ's teaching. But when the writers of Scripture are, as in this case, charged with deliberate imposture with a view to personal worldly ends, there is an end to all legitimate criticism of Holy Writ. Its truthfulness and trustworthiness and Divine authority are *ipso facto* denied, the moral and spiritual value of the Bible is evacuated, its claim to be the Word of God in any real sense is falsified, and Christ's testimony to it as such is set at nought as ignorance or imposture—either of which is equally fatal to His infallibility and authority as a teacher. It is quite in accordance with this for such critics to call the legislative parts of the Pentateuch priestly imposture, and much of the historical part, with Reuss, "bare fiction"; or to say, with Wellhausen, "There is not a word of truth in it," and generally, with Kuenen, to allege that the history of Israel, which is the root and type of the religion of Christ, was simply the highest form of ancient religion evolved naturally by man from his own consciousness and environment, without any special supernatural aid.

From all these, however, we must carefully distinguish those Christian critics who, while accepting many of the results of modern criticism, entirely repudiate such unbelief, maintain the supernatural in our religion, and stand firmly by what are called the great verities of the Christian faith. They give a unique place to the Bible in religious literature as containing a Divine Revelation, and hesitate to challenge directly the final authority of Christ as a Divine and infallible teacher. Later on it will be shown that even these, if they deny the truthfulness of Scripture, or assert or assume its indefinite erroneousness, as many do, are in the ultimate issue logically and irresistibly driven to deny the infallibility of Jesus as a teacher, as also His true Divinity as a person, and even His plenary inspiration as a man, with all the disastrous issues. But meantime it is but just to recognise the radical difference between them and all those who in any way

exclude the supernatural and practically reject the religion of the Bible.

WHEN AND WHERE IS THE SERIOUS QUESTION RAISED?

It is important also to discriminate precisely where this serious question is necessarily raised, and where it is not; for unquestionably mistakes have been made, and extreme untenable positions taken up, by opposing parties in this controversy. The Anti-orthodox have erred in raising it only when it was too late, after they had settled their critical conclusions without any regard to it, and then only as a side issue arising out of these conclusions, and not as a separate, independent, and primary question on its own proper evidence. On the other hand, the ultra-orthodox have often raised the question much too early, and on minor matters where it was not necessary to raise it at all; and have sounded the false alarm in such a way that when the place of real ground for alarm was reached, it became difficult for those most deeply interested to distinguish between the real and the false.

SELDOM ON QUESTIONS OF AUTHORSHIP.

Let it then be distinctly understood that, in our opinion, this serious question does not ordinarily arise in connection with the human authorship of the books or parts of the books of Scripture; for obviously one inspired writer might be used for it as well as another, and only in cases where the authorship is unequivocally declared could this question arise. Even then we must not forget that a book may still bear an author's name, though materially altered by subsequent editing and adapting to later conditions—the book being in substance his, though it may not be in the form in which it would have come originally from his hand. A famous case of this kind arose in the discussion in the Free Church of Scotland in connection with Dr. W. Robertson Smith's views as to the authorship of Deuteronomy, in which the extreme views on opposite sides were exposed, and the now current and generally accepted view maintained, that while in spirit and essence, in substance or principles, the book is Mosaic, yet as we have it is not in the form it would have come

from Moses—especially in the legislative parts; but Mosaic principles were developed, adapted, and added to by later inspired writers or writer to meet later needs and conditions, and different documents used in its composition, which plainly reveal themselves in our present Deuteronomy.

Nor should we, as is so often done, overlook the fact that the literary methods of these early times and Eastern peoples were exceedingly different in many respects from ours; and, consequently, what would be thought unpardonable among us was not unknown among them—such as connecting the names of distinguished men with books which might not be their actual productions, but only substantial expressions of their principles and spirit. There could, for example, not be a greater mistake than to judge of and measure the writings of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures by our English literary ideas and methods in the nineteenth century. Consequently, it is only in cases where a clear and unquestionable authorship is established and declared in a particular instance by Christ or some inspired writer, that the question of the truthfulness of Scripture or the infallibility of Christ can arise.

OR ON THE DATES OR METHOD OF COMPOSITION OF BOOKS.

The case is similar as to the *dates* of Bible books. There is often much uncertainty about these, and though the original may be much earlier than the date given to the writing in the form in which it has come down to us, it does not follow that the truth of Scripture is impugned by ascribing the latest form of it to the latest date.

So also with the method of composition. The truthfulness of Scripture, or the authority of Christ, is not at all affected by the assertion that Moses, or any other inspired writer, used various materials, found in sundry ancient documents, embodying primitive traditions, in the composition of a Biblical book; for this is only what we should expect—what seems as a matter of fact to have been done, and is, in substance, what Luke declares he did in the composition of his Gospel. But as the use, expression, and embodiment of that material were inspired by the Holy Spirit, to set forth the Divine Revelation according to

the mind of God,—as God would have it,—the truthfulness and authority of Scripture are in no way compromised thereby.

Nor can it be too strongly emphasised that it is only of the original Scriptures, properly interpreted, that infallible truth and Divine authority are predicated. Nothing but untold confusion and perverting prejudice have been created by the crude and absurd idea that this is affirmed of any version or translation. It is of the Scripture as originally given by inspiration of God, and of that alone, that any intelligent advocate predicates unerring truthfulness and Divine authority; and the frequent declaration of this fact ought to have long ago put an end to persistent misrepresentations, of which the perpetrators might well be ashamed.

NOT ON TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATIONS, ONLY ON THE ORIGINAL SCRIPTURES.

Still greater misconception has arisen, and much needless alarm aroused, by confounding the truthfulness of Scripture with traditional interpretations of it. Hence, when these have been assailed and abandoned, many have imagined that it was the Bible truth itself which was being attacked and destroyed; whereas it was not the Word of God at all, but only the traditions of men that were being exploded and swept away—a process that must be continually going on if the Word of God is to be kept pure and entire. There is a continual tendency to conceal, overcrust, and thereby pervert the truth of God by the traditions of men; and there is no more imperative necessity for those who would reach the Eternal Rock—the Living Word—to drink therefrom the pure water of life freely, than remorselessly, but wisely, to clear away all these traditions and traditional interpretations of men, so far as they hide the truth, or hinder us hearing the very voice, and feeling the very heart of God, breathing and beating through His inspired Word.

THE PRECISE POINT AT WHICH THE SUPREME QUESTION ARISES.

It is only of the original Word, then, freed from all errors of transcription, translation, and interpolation, and that Word so

truly interpreted that we have ascertained its real meaning and realised the very voice and mind of God therein, that infallible truthfulness and Divine authority are predicable or predicated. But when we have ascertained these, what we have is the truth and nothing but the truth of God. It is here, precisely here, that we come to the parting of the ways between God's truth and man's error. Just at this very point we arrive at the ridge of the range of investigation, on the one side of which is the very truth of God, and nothing else than truth ; and on the other side of which is mere human speculation, and the ever varying, never certain, and always errant opinion of men. Truth and error, it has been well said, come sometimes as near to each other as the opposite sides of a razor. Perhaps no case in the history of theological discussion so well illustrates this as the present ; and in nothing, perhaps, is it so patently and solemnly evident as in connection with our Lord's teaching as to Scripture.

TESTIMONY OF LEADING SCHOLARS AND THEOLOGIAN'S AS TO THE TRUE POSITION.

One large class of critics, among whom may be reckoned many of the foremost Biblical scholars and highest authorities in critical questions of to-day, claim, and rightly claim, full liberty for criticism on all questions connected with Scripture and religion ; and yet hold with strongest conviction and deepest reverence that on any matter connected therewith on which our Lord has expressed His mind, there is, and ought to be, an end of controversy. They maintain that His words, when we have really found them, and properly interpreted them,—so as to have truly arrived at what He meant by them,—settle, and should settle, the questions for every Christian and every reverent student of Scripture. This, too, is said, not merely when referring to moral and religious questions, properly so called—for example, all matters of faith and duty ; but also on all Biblical and other questions on which He has clearly given His mind, if He has done so ; in fact, that He spake the truth, and nothing but the truth, on every matter of every kind on which He ever spake ; and that when we truly know and ascertain the meaning of His words, on any matter whatever, religious, moral, Biblical, historical, or any kind of subject, there is nothing

but infallible truth in every statement that He ever made, every reference or allusion He ever introduced, and every word He ever spake. Consequently, there is an authoritative settlement of every controversy, question, matter, or fact on which He has clearly expressed His mind, if he has really expressed His own mind.

Some of these critics, too, are among the most learned and advanced on Biblical questions of our age, and have made some of the ablest and most valuable contributions to Biblical criticism, theological literature, and apologetic defence in this or any land. Let me mention only Professor Dr. Robertson Smith, whose scholarship and ability no one will question, and whom few, certainly none of those whose errors we oppose, will charge with claiming, or exercising, too little liberty in Biblical criticism, or in arriving at insufficiently advanced results. In his own defence on the questions connected with Deuteronomy he stated, as already referred to:—"If I thought that anything in my views, whether in themselves so far true or false, impugned the truth or authority of the teaching of our Lord, I should feel myself on dangerous and untenable ground; but it is only a very strained exegesis that can even appear to make this out." He also stated: "I am willing to have my views tested even by the strictest views of plenary inspiration." He also condemns the now prevalent view that the Bible only *contains* the Word of God along with an indefinite number of other things not God's Word. "People now say that Scripture *contains* God's Word, when they mean that part of the Bible is the Word of God and another part is the word of man. That is not the doctrine of our Churches, which hold that the substance of *all* Scripture is God's Word. What is not part of the record of God's Word is no part of Scripture." And he repudiates the idea of questioning, far more of "rejecting the supreme authority of our Lord." These words indicate the true and reverent position for every earnest student of the Divine Word to take up. And surely the lengths to which he has, nevertheless, felt himself free to go in Bible criticism, in various directions, ought to satisfy every reverent student of the Word of God that the maintaining of the truthfulness of Scripture, and the infallibility of Christ as a teacher, may be quite consistent with the fullest freedom of Biblical criticism, and might for ever silence the vain cant of a vaunting, would-be advanced criticism.

ADVANCED CRITICISM FALSELY SO CALLED.

Advanced criticism ! Why, the criticism that assails the truthfulness of Scripture, or impugns the infallibility of Christ, is not advanced but retrograde,—not only destructive but self-destructive ; and, in the final issue, a stultification and annihilation of all criticism whatever ;—inasmuch as it discredits the materials and destroys the basis on which it rests, and which alone gives value to it, or its results, or any sense to criticism. To this conclusion all the second class of critics must come at last, however they may in other things differ from each other. Nor can the least rationalistic of them easily or logically stop short of this,—with all the tremendous issues involved therein, indicated above. All who from any cause or on any ground deny that the Bible—the whole Bible (“all Scripture”)—is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority ; and consequently assert its indefinite erroneousness and unauthoritativeness,—which is simply the converse,—may without any inconsistency, and must, by sheer logical necessity, deny its infallibility or Divine authority in everything. Because the Bible claims this for itself, for *all* Scripture, as can be demonstrated ; and makes this the basis of all its other claims, and the ground of the belief of all its particular truths.

Therefore, if this, its fundamental claim, is proved to be false, its whole veracity and authority are of necessity destroyed and gone. It cannot, therefore, be the Word of God at all, in any sense ; for it is surely a first and necessary postulate of all religion and ethics, that the God of truth cannot lie. It can only be the false and fabricated word of erring, or untruthful, or audacious men. The only possible way to escape from this conclusion is to show that the Bible does not make this claim for itself, and to overthrow all the overwhelming mass of evidence which proves that it *does*. But this our opponents have never yet done,—never even attempted to do, and never can do. The very attempt to do so would be the most effectual way to convince them of its impossibility. And since our Lord endorses this claim of Scripture, and, by words that cannot be evaded, declares its truthfulness and Divine authority in the most explicit and emphatic manner,—in words that are as if “written with the point of a diamond, and with lead in the rock for ever,”—yea, postulates it, and in His own invariable practice proceeds upon

the assumption of its truth as beyond question ; it follows as a simple and irresistible logical necessity that all who deny or question this claim must deny or question Christ's infallibility and Divine authority as a teacher, and assert the erroneousness and falsity of His teaching. No wonder that Dr. W. Robertson Smith, recognising this, and realising the seriousness of it, should have used the solemn and weighty words already referred to, as to the dangerousness and untenableness of the ground of those that would dare to impugn or question the truth or authority of the teaching of our Lord. To the same effect others of the foremost biblical scholars and greatest theologians write on this crucial question—such as Dr. Liddon, Dr. Dörner, Dr. Westcott, Dr. Ellicott. See Appendix.

NOTE.—“A sincere and intelligent belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ obliges us to believe that Jesus Christ, as a Teacher, is infallible. To charge Him with error is to deny that He is God . . . ; unless God can Himself succumb to error, or can consent to deceive His reasonable creatures. The man who sincerely believes that Jesus Christ is God will not doubt that His every word standeth sure, and that whatever has been sanctioned and sealed by His supreme authority is independent of, and unassailable by, the fallible judgment of His creatures respecting it.”—Dr. Liddon, *Our Lord's Divinity*, pp. 453, 472.

CHAPTER II.

THE ALLEGED GROUNDS IN SCRIPTURE OF CHRIST'S FALLIBILITY, AND THEIR MANI- FEST ERRONEOUSNESS.

THE only possible way to avoid this tremendous conclusion, with all the fearful consequences thereof to a world whose supreme need is an infallible teacher, is to prove that Christ does not sanction that Bible claim; and, therefore, of necessity to explain away all the evidence and argument by which it is established that He did. The very attempt to do this would best convince them of its force and unanswerableness. So strongly has this been felt that candid Rationalistic critics have been constrained to admit the truth of it, and have frankly owned that the plain meaning of Christ's words and Christ's way of regarding and using Scripture was inconsistent with their critical conclusions; and that, in fact, Jesus regarded and used the Bible as the believing plain man does. Nevertheless, adhering to these conclusions they have, though reluctantly, and at first with hesitation and not a little delicacy, at length deliberately taken up the position that Christ was not infallible as a teacher, and have avowedly proceeded to prove and explain it.

Whatever may be thought of the proof and the explanations, it is all-important to note the admission that Christ did stand by the Bible as such, and did recognise its truthfulness and Divine authority. With it, therefore, He stands or falls. Accordingly, some of these critics, desiring to uphold His Divinity, and to preserve His authority as a teacher in many respects, have endeavoured to explain how, consistently with errors or mistakes in some of His teaching and utterances, His Divinity might still be maintained, and His teaching in other respects received

as authoritative. To their credit be it said, some of them have done their best to do so, and have evinced an earnest and commendable desire to speak of Him, and of everything directly connected with Him, with a reverence that reveals the depth of the impression He has made on the minds of all earnest men; and the seriousness, if not the perilousness, of even appearing to question or to qualify His infallibility or authority. Others, it must be said, have evinced no such reverence, carefulness, or realisation of the momentousness of the issues at stake, but with a reckless, almost contemptuous, audacity have rushed on to the full and fatal termination. But whether with reverence or irreverence, carefulness or rashness, to this conclusion they have come, this avowal they have made, and this position they have sought to establish, explain, and defend as best they could.

I. CHRIST'S NESCIENCE (MARK 13³²) NO GROUND FOR INFERENCE OF ERRANCY OR ERROR IN TEACHING.

The more cautious and reverent have sought Scripture support for their theories, and have even quoted a single sentence from Christ Himself that seemed to favour their contention: "Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13³²). But surely it is not only "a very strained," but a very strange and significant exegesis that could draw support from such an utterance for such a doctrine,—especially when it is against the whole tone, tenor, and explicit teaching of Scripture on the subject. Taking these words even as they stand, they are surely sufficiently explained by saying either that Christ, as a teacher, had received no message to deliver from the Father as to the precise date of the judgment day; or that, as a man, this had not been revealed to His human consciousness.

But how from this such a doctrine could be deduced as that Christ was not infallible, but erroneous in His teaching, or how it could be supposed to favour the idea that He might and did err in any statement that He made on any question, is amazing. It can be explained only by the exegetical crudeness and looseness of thinking of such critics, or by the perverting influence of critical prejudice, the wish being father to the thought. Why, these words teach, or imply, absolutely nothing in favour of such

a view; and give not a shadow of a foundation for such a doctrine.

THE TEXT IMPLIES HIS INFALLIBILITY IN HIS TEACHING.

On the contrary, if they teach anything on the subject of Christ's infallibility, they seem to teach, as near as may be, just the opposite. For if when any such thing was not at any time within the range of Christ's human consciousness, or not given to Him, as a teacher, to deliver as a message from His Father, He took care to say nothing on the subject, but frankly and expressly declared this,—then, surely this implies—*first*, that He never spake except what was given Him by His Father, as He elsewhere explicitly states; and, therefore, only what was both truthful and of Divine authority; *second*, that when He did make a pronouncement or utterance on any subject whatever, it was both true and authoritative; and should, therefore, be decisive and final on the subject, as the Divine utterance of the Father through the Son. He Himself said so to the Jews and His disciples that the words that He spake to them were not His, but the Father's that sent Him—what He heard from the Father (John 7¹⁶ 8²⁶ 12⁴⁹ 14^{10. 24} 17⁸). Thus their own chief and only direct text, when properly interpreted, instead of a proof, is a refutation of their doctrine, and a confirmation of the opposite—even Christ's infallibility and Divine authority as a teacher.

2. CHRIST'S MENTAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT. NO REASON TO INFER HIS FALLIBILITY OR ERROR AS A TEACHER.

Equally futile is it to seek support for their view from those texts that teach the mental and moral development of the Man Christ Jesus, such as: "He grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2⁵²). "To make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2¹⁰). "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered," etc. (Heb. 5⁸).

HIS REAL HUMANITY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT A GREAT AND PRECIOUS FACT, MUCH LOST AND UNREALISED.

Doubtless the mental development and the moral growth of Christ taught in these and other passages are an important and precious part of Divine Revelation, the value of which has been all too little, and far too slowly recognised. Indeed, by the Church generally it has hitherto been largely unrealised, and, if not ignored, it has been practically, though not formally, denied, and not really believed or practically entered into and acted on as if fact. Yea, so much has this been the mental attitude and habit of the Church generally, that were some, who would by many be regarded as unduly tenacious of the things most surely believed among us, to proclaim all that they believe, have thought, and felt, and which they have learned from Scripture and found infinitely precious in their own spiritual experience, in regard to the real humanity of Christ, the probability is that they would by most Christians be regarded as unsound in the faith, if not prosecuted for heresy. The Church being above all things concerned to maintain the Divinity of our Lord, and having become, through long-standing controversy, almost morbidly sensitive as to anything that might seem to encroach upon this doctrine, has been unconsciously inclined to the opposite extreme ; and has largely ignored, or left unexplored, and practically not realised, the real and veritable humanity of Christ—with all the blessed infinitudes of grace and truth, of light and comfort implied therein.

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS AND EPISTLES INTENSELY HUMAN
WHILE TRULY DIVINE.

Anxious supremely to preserve Christ's Divinity, she has largely lost, or lost sight of, His humanity ; and replaced the true, tender, most sympathetic, and intensely human Son of Man of the Gospels by the Divine but distant, the unrealisable and somewhat artificial Son of God of a cold dogmatic theology. Thus men have not only lost much of the blessed personal fascination of the Man Christ Jesus, but also failed to appreciate, or realise fully, or utilise adequately the fulness of Godhead treasured up in Him for us ; because not approached through

the avenue and appropriated through the instrumentality of His true humanity. How few truly believe that Jesus *grew* in wisdom as He *grew* in stature,—that He increased in knowledge just as we do,—that His human mind developed from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to manhood, in precisely the same way, and by the use of the same means as ours! How few realise that He *learned* anything, least of all that He learned obedience—that the habit of active obedience to the will of God was formed, and confirmed into an active life principle by Him, by the common process of obeying and suffering, just as with us!

To how many is it actual fact that He was *made perfect*, really *perfected* in moral character,—disciplined by suffering as we are? and that not merely officially as our High Priest, but personally perfected as a man—His personal perfection being the basis and means of His official perfection? How many really take in the truth and fulness of true humanity in that deep and unqualified declaration that in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren? He was in *all* points tempted like as we are (Heb. 2¹⁷ 4¹⁵). Yet the perfection of His priesthood is expressly based upon this identity of nature and similarity of experience with ours, “that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest” (Heb. 2¹⁷). How few practically believe that Christ really had all our infirmities, and passed through all our trials,—though Scripture explicitly states that “Himself took our infirmities,” that “He was touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and bore our sickness,” and “that He was in all things tempted like as we are”!

ITS SPIRITUAL VALUE IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

The whole Gospel history is largely an illustration of this fact—yea, the real use of the record of Christ's temptation, and the meaning and value of His example to us, depend upon His being essentially the same as we are, both in nature and experience. Indeed, without this His humanity is to us largely an empty unreality, His incarnation a phantasy, His example of little significance, His resistance of temptation a semblance, His human sympathy an untouching shadow; and all the infinite preciousness of Jesus as a sympathising Saviour, because a veritable brother-Man, which alone heals the wounds of a bleed-

ing humanity, vanishes as a dream. Would it not be to many a surprise, if not like a heresy, to be told that Jesus, as a man, was as truly dependent as we are on the providence of God and His own diligence for the supply of His own bodily wants; and dependent on the Holy Spirit, and the diligent use of all the means of grace—prayer, the study of Scripture, meditation attendance on church and religious ordinances—for the comfort, cultivation, and nourishment of His own soul, and the sustaining and developing of His own spiritual life? And yet this seems to be the true teaching of Scripture, and the real meaning of His habits of prayer, study of Scripture, meditation, and use of ordinances. They were a moral and spiritual necessity to the man Christ Jesus as they are of every man that would become like Him. It is what seems necessarily involved in His real humanity, what is plainly and repeatedly expressed in Scripture reference, and what to us imparts a profound significance, and infinite preciousness to His whole life as we, like Him, “fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold upon the eternal life.”

In fact, it appears that Jesus did all that He did as Man and Saviour, attained all that He attained in character and service, overcame all that He overcame in trial and temptation, and accomplished all that He accomplished for God and man,—not because of His Divinity only (though that is implied), but simply by the use of the same spiritual means, and under the power of the same Holy Spirit, that we may receive in the same way as He did in answer to prayer. By the power of the Spirit and the use of the means of grace, He knew and taught the truth, resisted temptation, overcame Satan, wrought miracles, cast out devils, did His entire work as Prophet, Priest, and King (Luke 4¹⁸), developed His own spiritual life, perfected His own character, lived His whole life, and finished all His work. From His first conscious act and recorded utterance onwards to His first public discourse,—when He Himself attributed all the work He had come to do, in fulfilment of prophecy, to the Spirit,—right on through His whole life till the last crowning act, when He, “through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God”—all, all was accomplished, by the power of the same Spirit, and by the use of the same means, as we may have in the same way.

This gives a vast scope and significance to that pregnant Divine utterance—"In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." It makes Jesus intensely real and infinitely precious. It brings Him very near to us, into living contact with us, makes Him truly one of ourselves—our veritable Brother-man while our true eternal God. It makes His whole life instinct with meaning and full of inspiration to us as men; and gives every fragment and fibre of the Gospel narratives an inestimable value. It is no heresy, but a priceless, though much neglected, portion of Divine Revelation, which has been found unspeakably precious in Christian experience, enabling us to get into living touch with Jesus in everything; and thereby to realise and appropriate the fulness of Godhead dwelling for us in Him.

ITS DOCTRINAL IMPORTANCE.

It is the true security against both Unitarian and Humanitarian heresy, and the best means of recalling the Church from the practical heresy of ignoring the real humanity of Christ. For to deny, ignore, or minimise His real humanity, is as really heresy as to deny, ignore, or minimise His true Divinity. And the most effectual antidote to every form of Unitarian, Humanitarian, or Anti-Trinitarian error, and to the influence which a fuller, and often charming, exhibition of Christ's humanity has unquestionably given them, is to bring forth and cherish, in all its scriptural fulness, the real humanity of Christ; and to present His unique Divine-human personality from that side of it which lies nearest to ourselves, and is most appreciable by us. Nor should it ever be lost sight of that He has revealed Himself to us as **GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH**.

It will thus appear that we accept in full, and with the most grateful cordiality, the Bible Revelation of the mental and moral development of Jesus,—that we are prepared to go beyond most in glorying in the real humanity of Christ, and that we hold with unqualified delight, that our Lord was, as a man, made subject to all the limiting conditions of our humanity. In fact, we set no limit to the entireness of His humanity, or the absoluteness of the statement that He was "*made in all things* like unto His brethren"—save that limitation which is necessary to preclude

the fatal error and prime heresy that He is nothing more than man ; and to negative every form of teaching that would deny or evacuate His Divinity, or invalidate His Divine authority as a Teacher.

3. THE KENOSIS GIVES NO GROUND FOR QUESTIONING HIS INFALLIBILITY AS A TEACHER.

The Kenosis is a Bible Revelation, a profound, precious fact, a wondrous manifestation of the grace of God and the love of Christ, as set forth in the classical passage Phil. 2⁵⁻⁸, and is indicated in leading elements above and elsewhere.¹ But it is here, just here, that we part company with all who in any way would weaken the authority or qualify the infallibility of Jesus as a teacher. While holding as fully as any, and more fully than most, the veritable humanity, and the mental and moral development of Christ, and the reality of the Kenosis as revealed in Scripture, we utterly repudiate the dangerous and anti-scriptural inferences drawn therefrom, limitative, and ultimately subversive of the Divine authority and infallibility of His teaching: and thus claim to be essentially differentiated from those who presume to make them. Nay more, one is curious to know the process of reasoning, and longs to look at the logical syllogism by which the errancy of Jesus as a teacher is *deduced* from the fact of His mental or moral development as a man. One is constrained to wonder by what logical feat or method of reasoning *any* inference can be drawn in favour of the fallibility of Christ from any teaching of Scripture as to His increase in knowledge or growth in wisdom, the development of His faculties or perfectionation of His character.

NO NECESSARY CONNECTION BETWEEN NESCIENCE AND ERROR OR ERRANCY IN TEACHING IN ANY MAN.

It does not surely require much logical acumen to see that even in any man there is no necessary connection between

¹ See Appendix. "The Logos realised in Jesus, in the form of a human existence subject to the law of time and progress, that relation to God of perfect dependence and filial communion which He realised before His incarnation in the permanent form of Divine life" (Godet on *John*, vol. i. p. 40).

mental growth and didactic error,—between limitation of knowledge and erroneousness of teaching,—between increase in wisdom or development in character and error or errancy as a teacher. It is surely a very marvellous and peculiar process of ratiocination which infers that because Jesus grew in wisdom He erred in teaching,—that since He developed in character He made mistakes in statement,—that since He might be for the moment not consciously instructed or informed in some things, He therefore fell into error in other things,—that since He might not, or did not, at once know everything as a man, He therefore must err, or did err, in anything He taught or said, and even in what He claimed and professed to know. How strange the reasoning that Jesus actually taught as true what was false, because there was one far off event at the end of time, the precise day and hour of which was not present to His human consciousness, and of which He will not, therefore, teach anything, and that, too, in what it was His special function and subject to know and to teach! For it must be firmly grasped and emphasised that it is what He taught about the Word of God, which He came to expound and fulfil, that His infallibility and authority are asserted. It is surely the first and fundamental question in religion and in all truth, to learn and to be assured of what is the standard and source of the truth. It is immeasurably more important than the knowledge or assurance of any particular truth; and is a self-evident necessity to the knowledge or assurance of any individual truth.

Is not their conclusion, then, a most manifest *non sequitur*? Because a theologian, or a moral philosopher, is not an expert in—say chemistry, does it therefore follow that he will teach error in theology or ethics? Because a mathematician is not a mental philosopher, does that prove his errancy in mathematics, even if he were the worst reasoner on other subjects,—as Sir William Hamilton said the best mathematician in Britain in his time was? Surely they need not err if, like wise men, they limit themselves to their own subjects, and teach only what they know. “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness,” said Jesus; and He never did anything else, and therefore all He said was and must be true. Even if they sometimes make references beyond their own special province, they need not necessarily make mistakes, or

teach error; unless they fail to avail themselves of the teaching of those who know. It thus appears that even in the case of any man there is no necessary connection between limitation of knowledge and erroneousness, or even errancy in teaching. Therefore mental or moral development, with any limitation of knowledge involved therein, does not imply error and fallibility as a teacher in anything, certainly not at all in what it was His special subject and function to know and to teach.

HOW MUCH LESS IN THE PERFECT MAN AND THE SON OF GOD
ON THE SUPREME QUESTION IN RELIGION AND ETHICS.

How much less in the perfect Man, the specially Spirit-filled teacher, the sent of God—yea, the Son of God, and very God Himself? For, let it be specially observed, that what we claim Christ's authority for at present is not any question of science, or philosophy, or criticism (though on these, should He express His mind, we should feel bound to believe Him, or launch upon a shoreless sea of doubts and difficulties without helm or compass), but a distinctively religious question,—yea, the supremely important and fundamental question in religion, the question that lies at the basis of and is essential to the settlement of all other religious questions,—viz. the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and authority of the Word of God. Is the Bible true, trustworthy, and authoritative? Should men receive "all" Scripture, as the *locus classicus* puts it (2 Tim. 3¹⁶), as the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority; and take it with full confidence as their guide through life to immortality? This is *the* religious question which it concerns men most to know, which it was Christ's special function as the supreme religious teacher sent from God to know and teach; and which, as we have seen, He has in the most unequivocal and emphatic way declared and settled.

IF HIS INCARNATION NECESSITATED HIS FALLIBILITY AND
ERRONEOUSNESS IN TEACHING, IT DEFEATS HIS MISSION
AND ITS END.

Therefore, if in *this* He has erred, in what can we trust Him, and to whom shall we go for light in this most vital matter? If

in this, which it was His special function to know and to teach, He has erred and led men astray, and taught, not only what was not true, but the opposite of the truth,—how is it possible for men to trust or believe Him in anything? And if the mental and moral development of Jesus is held to imply this, and to warrant the inference that the limitation of His knowledge or nescience, as they euphemistically call it, involved this, then did it not manifestly unfit Him for His work? Did not His very nature render Him incapable of fulfilling His prime vocation,—being a reliable teacher on what men most needed to know? Did not the conditions of His human existence necessitate the defeat of the very *end* of His existence, and the incarnation ensure the failure of the primary purpose of His mission and its own end?—even to reveal the truth, and the Divine source and supreme standard of the truth, in order that He might thereby enlighten and save. In fact, was not the incarnation on this theory a failure and a mistake, and salvation through the incarnate Son an impossibility? Consequences these surely sufficiently startling and serious to make the advocates of such a theory pause and think, showing the untenableness of the theory, and the absurdity of drawing such an inference from such a ground!

NOTE.—“To deny our Lord’s infallibility on the ground of a single known limitation of knowledge in His human intellect, is not merely an inconsequence, it is inconsistent with any serious belief in His real Divinity. . . . No such limitation, we may be sure, can interfere with the completeness of His redemptive office. It cannot be supposed to involve any of that which the Teacher and Saviour of mankind should know.”—Dr. Liddon, *Our Lord’s Divinity*, pp. 472, 464.

CHAPTER III.

THE DISPROOF FROM SCRIPTURE, AND THE PROOF OF CHRIST'S INFALLIBILITY.

As we have seen, there is no necessary, or even natural, connection between limitation of knowledge and fallibility of teaching, even in the case of any man,—especially when he keeps to what he knows. Nescience and inerrancy are quite compatible in any man, while limitation of knowledge and truthfulness of teaching are usual in all wise teachers,—even when making references beyond their own proper province, if they exercise the common prudence of referring to authorities on the subjects referred to. If this is so in the case of the teaching of ordinary fallen men, how much more in the case of the perfect man—the supreme Teacher sent from God, when teaching on His own proper subject, and professedly carrying out His Divine mission? Let us take the very lowest ground—ground so low that we shrink from taking it in regard to our adorable Lord, and could not have taken it at all, save to explode the assumptions and demonstrate the absurdity of the theories of those who would drag down the high theme of our Lord's unique teaching to this low level.

NO NECESSARY CONNECTION BETWEEN LIMITATION OF KNOW- LEDGE AND ERROR OR ERRANCY IN TEACHING, ESPECI- ALLY IN CHRIST.

Are we to suppose that because His human mind developed like ours, that our Lord, who is “the wisdom of God,” did not possess the wisdom common to ordinary men in teaching? If not, there was no inevitable need for Him to make any mistakes in teaching, even if He spoke on matters not strictly religious or

not belonging to His special mission, though all that is recorded of His teaching belongs to that. If the teaching of experts, when limiting themselves to what they know, is reliable, and received as true, are we to imagine that the teaching of Him who is "the Truth" is erroneous when professedly declaring, as a religious teacher, in the name of God and in the most solemn and emphatic manner, what was avowedly the mind of God in regard to the fundamental question of all religion,—even as to what is the supreme standard and fountain of truth, and the inviolable truthfulness and Divine authority it possesses? If not, then the teaching of Jesus must be held as decisive and final on this question; and no inference from His human development can give a shadow of a shade of a foundation for the theory of the errancy of Jesus in this or any such question,—nay, this is by the very supposition precluded, and is therefore totally irrelevant. All this is true were He *mere* man, under all the limiting conditions of a *fallen* humanity. All through, indeed, the advocates of this theory have proceeded on the assumption that Christ was a mere imperfect man, or that He was, because of being man, under all the liability to error of *fallen* men. Yea, some of them have arrogantly, and with unlimited confidence and presumption, spoken as if it were self-evident, and requiring no proof, that Christ must be fallible and erroneous as a teacher, since He was man, and since it is, as they say, human to err. What know we of perfect men? We have no reason or authority to make any such statement about them as to this. But having come to this indubitable conclusion by this short and easy method, they have in no mincing, though sufficiently absurd terms declared it to be heresy to question the theory of the fallibility and erroneousness of Christ as a teacher, since He was man, as if that were tantamount to a denial of His humanity. We have shown that even were the assumption true, the inference is by no means necessary, and would, as a rule, be false. But this arrogant, though baseless assertion, as well as the statements and theories of the others refuted above, afford fair specimens of the crudeness of exegesis, looseness of reasoning, and shallowness of thought, so characteristic of many of these infallible assailants of Christ's infallibility!

I. HE WAS FIRST THE SINLESS MAN.

How strange that it seems never to have occurred to them to consider whether it was at all necessary to make any distinction between fallen and imperfect human nature as it is exhibited among us, and sinless and perfect human nature as it existed in Jesus! Their identity is quietly assumed, and far-reaching inferences are drawn from the one to the other, as if there were no difference between them. But this is surely a vast and astounding assumption. Before any inference at all can be drawn in favour of the fallibility and erroneousness of the teaching of Jesus from the fact of His real humanity, they have first to prove that there is no difference as to knowledge and errancy between a fallen and a perfect, a sinful and a sinless, human being, and that the one is as liable to error as the other. With wonted looseness and audacity, however, they assume this instead of proving it—in fact, these speculators are not in the habit of proving anything, but asserting everything. Why, the very attempt to prove it would at once disclose its untenableness and unreasonableness. The influence of sin in blinding the mind, perverting the judgment, and thus leading to error, is notorious, and forms the burden of many a powerful passage in the teaching of philosophy and the declarations of Scripture (Rom. 1, etc.). Yea, the Bible expressly states that one of the elements of the Divine image in which man was created was “Knowledge,”—like his Creator. Therefore, to assume that a sinless human nature, of which one of the essential elements was knowledge after the image of God, was as liable to error and to teach error as a sinful human nature; and from that baseless assumption to infer the fallibility and erroneousness of Christ as a teacher is such an obvious *petitio principii* and manifest *non sequitur*, that one is amazed how any man could be capable of it; and it illustrates well the blinding power of prejudice in a fallen humanity in a most significant way. It is not only a pure assumption that a sinless human nature was as liable to mistake or to err in statement or teaching as a sinful one, but an assumption impossible to prove, yea, contrary to probability, and fact, and reason. They, thus, base their whole astounding superstructure upon an unprovable and improbable, yea, palpably false, assumption and assertion.

2. HE WAS THE PERFECT MAN.

Further, Christ had not only a sinless but a perfect human nature when He became a teacher, and gave those utterances as to the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture on which we take our stand. He had a human nature, perfected in knowledge and wisdom by the study of Scripture, the experience of life, the diligent use of all the means of perfection, and by the full and lifelong use of that grace of God which Scripture says was on Him from the beginning,—yea, He made such a use of all these as no son of man ever approached to. Yet men, so erring themselves, will reason most confidently, though most unreasonably, from their own errancy and erroneusness to His.

3. HE WAS SPECIALLY ANOINTED BY THE HOLY GHOST FOR HIS TEACHING AND WHOLE WORK.

Nay more, Scripture expressly teaches that at the beginning of His public work, and in order perfectly to fit Him for it, the Divine Spirit came and abode on Him without measure (Luke 4¹⁸, John 3³⁴). Therefore had He been as deficient in knowledge and wisdom, and as liable to err as sinful and perverted men, are we on this account to imagine that He was not perfectly fitted by the Spirit's Divine fulness for the work which the Father had given Him to do?—a chief and prime part of which was to declare through the Spirit of all truth what was the source and standard of truth, and what the character and authority of *that* book which God has given to guide men through life, which He called the Word of God, and said of it, even to God Himself, "Thy Word is truth" (John 17¹⁷). Or are we for one moment to entertain the blasphemous thought that the Infinite Spirit of God was not able to fit Him for this work, and to render Him infallible in all His teaching? Does He not attribute all He said and did to the power of the Holy Ghost in Him? (Luke 4¹⁸ etc.). Does He not, therefore, Himself expressly and most decisively say that what He spoke was not His own, but what the Father gave Him to speak? (John 8^{6. 26} 10²⁴ 12⁴⁹ 17⁸). Can God err? And are not His last sublime and solemn words from glory to the Churches re-

corded in the Apocalypse declared to be literally “what the *Spirit saith* unto the Churches”? so that what He says is what the Spirit says. Can the Spirit of Truth mislead in teaching? Are not the words of the Son thus explicitly and inseparably identified with the words of the Father and the Spirit, because He spake as the Spirit gave Him utterance, what the Father gave Him to speak?

Must not all that He said be, therefore, the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority? And since Christ said all He did about the Scriptures after He had the full anointing of the Spirit, and spoke of them in the same way after His resurrection and ascension, it follows that if He did not know then He never knew, and throughout taught error on this supreme question. In short, this whole attempt to draw any inference from the mental development of Jesus is based upon three unphilosophical and anti-scriptural assumptions ;—*first*, that infallibility or truthfulness in teaching is impossible without infinitude of knowledge, which is an absurdity, contrary to fact and reason ; *second*, that the infinite Spirit of God *could* not so operate on the finite spirit of man as to render even the Son of Man, who is also the Son of God, infallible as a teacher, which is daring presumption ; and *third*, that the words of the Three Persons of the Godhead may be untrue, and have actually taught error, which is blasphemy.

HE PROMISED AND ENABLED EVEN HIS DISCIPLES TO UTTER TRULY GOD’S WORD BY THE SPIRIT.

Nor is this all ; not nearly all. For Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit to His disciples to guide them into all truth, and to enable them to speak with Divine truthfulness, wisdom, and power in all they said for Him, and even in their own defence in His service, and that because “it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you” (Matt. 10²⁹ Mark 13¹¹). In fulfilment of that promise, it is expressly said that on the Day of Pentecost they “spake as the Spirit gave them utterance.” And they wrote the N.T. Scriptures under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, like the prophets, “as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” “Not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth,” fitting

spiritual words to spiritual things.¹ So that what they said or wrote is described as "what the Spirit saith," and the Word they thus spoke or wrote under this inspiration is therefore declared to be not the word of man, "but as it is in truth, the Word of God" (1 Thess. 2¹³). They also under the same power, and in fulfilment of this and other promises, were led to the remembrance and into the meaning of "all things whatsoever He hath said unto them." Thus, too, after the resurrection He "opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures," "showing them from all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24); and also enabled and authorised them truly and authoritatively to interpret them, as the Spirit's inspired interpretation of God's Word. And on this ground we receive, and rightly receive, their own writings and their interpretations of the O.T. writings as true, reliable, and Divinely authoritative.

Are we then to ascribe less infallibility and authority to the Lord Himself than to His apostles? Has the Holy Spirit done less for the Master than the disciple? Is the authority of the servant as a teacher higher than the authority of his Lord? This is the desperate and self-stultifying position that the assertors of the errancy and erroneousness of Jesus, because of their absurd inferences from His humanity, are irresistibly driven to; and the very statement of it is the refutation and demonstration of the falseness of their theory and the untenableness of their position. Yet this is the position that those take up who seek to prove His fallibility as a teacher from His alleged "human ignorance of natural science, historical ignorance, and the like,"² and the reality of His human "limitation, as well in knowledge as in moral energy" (mark that!), as also from His actual "exegetical mistakes," as they call them, so daringly, so groundlessly, and so blasphemously alleged. Why, if Christ erred not only in His own spontaneous utterances as to the Scripture, but also in His interpretation of the Scripture, which He Himself was to fulfil, and on which He was supposed and claimed to throw such wondrous Divine light and to interpret with Divine authority, then, verily, the teaching of Christ is less truthful than the teaching of His disciples, and the authority of the

¹ See Alford and Fawcett, *in loco*.

² Bishop Ellicott's *Christus Comprobator*.

servant is greater than the authority of his Lord. For it is patent on the page of Scripture, and beyond dispute from the very words of Christ, that He *did* promise to give them—as they therefore afterwards claimed to possess—the Spirit to lead them into all truth,—and to render them infallible in all their interpretations of the Scripture, as well as of His own words which the Spirit would bring to their remembrance, and in all they taught or uttered in His name ; for “it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.” Nor is there any possibility, therefore, of evading this astounding and stultifying conclusion except by denying or disowning the infallibility and authority of Christ as a teacher in anything, even in that in which He was most deliberate and emphatic, and what is most essential. This implies in the ultimate issue, as will appear below, that He misunderstood and misinterpreted the Scripture, misled His disciples by this and by unfulfilled promises ; and therefore mistook, or was unfit for, His mission ! These are some of the inevitable and tremendous, but preposterous, results of this crude and audacious theory.

HE WAS GOD INCARNATE, AND HIS WORDS ARE DECLARED
TO BE THE FATHER’S WORDS.

Nor is even this all, not nearly all. For the real effect and ultimate result of this erroneous doctrine of Christ’s humanity, which implies Christ’s errancy and error in teaching, is to evacuate and practically to nullify His Divinity. It leaves no room for His Divinity here at all. It is really shut out from any place, function, or efficiency in His unique Divine-human personality—in that prime and fundamental part of His work where, if anywhere, it seems natural, vital, and necessary for it to be effectual.

If it remain in words, it is only in words—in name, not in reality ; it is of no use or efficacy. It has no substance or potency ; and to all practical intents it is ignored, nullified, and might as well not be. In fact, many reason and speak about His ignorance, fallibility, and error in teaching, in the same way as if He were a mere man ; as if His Divinity had no place at all in this primary, essential, and supremely important part of His work as the Messiah and the Teacher sent from God. As

if it were irrelevant to take that into account in anyway to qualify or limit their speculations as to the errancy and erroneousness of His teaching?

They talk largely, vaguely, and frequently enough about the limits and limitations, infirmities and ignorance of our Lord as a man, with all His liability to error, and actual mistakes arising therefrom. But the great sublime fact of His Godhead seems so little realised or appreciated as not to have impressed upon them any due sense of their own littleness and limitations in speculating upon "the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." Nor has it prevented them from exhibiting their own ignorance and irreverence in reasoning as if His Divinity were of no account in His teaching, nor even restrained some from daring to declare that "the right of criticism must be maintained, even as against the Lord Himself,"¹ and they actually fear not to charge the God of truth with "exegetical mistakes" and false teaching.

But surely the greatest of all exegetical and theological mistakes is to imagine that, though Christ is man as well as God, He is therefore not one but two; to imply that, though we may *speak* of His humanity apart from His divinity, the two natures really exist apart, which is, in fact, to deny the incarnation. His Godhead as well as His humanity is responsible for whatever He as the God-man says or does, for every word He utters, as well as for everything He does; because it is He, the one unique Person, who utters and does it. Therefore, whatever the man Christ Jesus said God also said, whatever His humanity uttered was the utterance of His Godhead also; and for every part and particle of it His Godhead was therefore also responsible—yea, His Godhead supremely. For after all, His Divinity, *not* His humanity, was the supreme factor in His Divine-human personality. It was "*GOD manifest in the flesh*," "the *Word* made flesh," that uttered all; and therefore before every utterance He ever made might be written, "Thus saith the Word of God." The words of Christ are expressly called the words of God. And lest by looking at Him and listening to Him as a man any should think His words merely a man's words, and lest they should in any way question their Divinity, truth, reliability, or authority; and in order that men might be shut up to

¹ *Christus Comprobator*.

receive His words as God's words, He said, "The word that ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me" (John 14²⁴. 10 7¹⁶ 8²⁶ 12⁴⁹ 17⁵).

And surely it is the greatest of all errors to suppose, assert, or imply that the "Word of God" can teach error, that God can mislead, that the God of Truth, who expressly calls Himself "the faithful and true witness" (Rev. 1) and "*the Truth*," can teach error or utter anything that is untrue. Whatever mysteries there may be—(and they are many and profound)—in the union of the Divine with the human in the person of Christ, the relation between them, and the communication from the one to the other, whatever else this involved, implied at least that the God-man shall speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. It secures at least truthfulness in utterance, and surely requires freedom from error in teaching and statement,—especially as to such primary and essential questions as the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and authority of that book which is called the Word of God, and which God has given us to be man's guide through life to immortality. A Divinity that fails in this is a practical nonentity to us, as far as this prime, supreme, religious question and need of mankind are concerned. A God that can err and utter untruths as true, give errors of the age as eternal facts, delusions of ignorant times as unquestionable verities, is a God that is worthless as an authority in truth or guide in religion, and shocks our first and fundamental ideas of a God. What intelligent or honest man could believe or trust such as a Saviour, far less worship Him as God? Thus the theory of Christ's humanity, that implies His errancy and asserts that He actually erred, really evacuates and nullifies His Divinity, and virtually disowns and denies it.

THE WHOLE QUESTION OF THE DIVINE-HUMAN PERSON ALIKE IS THUS RE-RAISED ON A SIDE ISSUE.

In this way the whole question as to the Divine-human personality of Christ, which was supposed to have been settled thoroughly and for ever, is re-raised in this controversy; and that, too, as a side issue—as a consequence of the critical necessities of the opponents of the truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture. Nor have they merely re-raised it; but

they have, forsooth ! resettled it in a way contrary to the teaching of all Scripture and the faith of the whole Christian Church from the beginning. They have done so, too, not, as they should, by an investigation of the proper scriptural and other evidence, by which His true Divinity, and consequent infallibility, and Divine authority are established, but by inference, wrong inference too, from other supposed conclusions. And what is most significant is that this inference is required by the exigencies of their theory, for without it the whole theory, with its fatal applications and destructive ramifications, vanishes like the baseless fabric of a vision before the luminous beams of Christ's true Divinity. Thus the errancy of Christ is prevented and His inerrancy secured by, *first*, the perfection of His human nature ; *second*, by His full anointing of the Holy Ghost ; and *third*, by His true and proper Divinity ; a threefold cord, surely this, not thus easily broken. To these a fourth may be added in Christ's own claim and words, backed by the Christian evidences. Nor is it possible to evade this conclusion, except by a supposition that only reveals more clearly than before the radical erroneousness of the whole contention.

NOTE.—“The common sense of faith assures us that if Christ is really Divine, His infallibility follows as a thing of course. It is certain from Scripture that our Lord was constantly giving proofs during His earthly life of an altogether superhuman knowledge. To maintain on the one hand that Jesus Christ is God, and on the other that He is a teacher and propagator, not of trivial and unimportant, but of far-reaching and substantial errors :—this would have appeared to ancient Christendom a paradox so singular as to be absolutely incredible.”—Dr. Liddon, *Our Lord's Divinity*, pp. 472, 464, 454. See also Bishop Ellicott's *Christus Comprobator*.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ASSUMED GROUNDS IN REASON CONTRARY TO REASON, FOR CHRIST'S FALLIBILITY AND ERRONEOUSNESS AS A TEACHER.

ON three different grounds have the opponents of Christ's infallibility usually based their reasoning in support of their theory of the fallibility and erroneousness of His teaching.

THE KENOTIC AND CRITICAL GROUNDS.

First. On the ground that He was man. But it has been shown that this does not warrant their inference, inasmuch as it does not necessarily involve fallibility far less actual error; while both are precluded by the perfection of His humanity, by the measureless inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and by the fact that He was God as well as man. This is, therefore, proved to be untenable ground.

The *second* ground taken is that it was not Christ's mission to declare the truth about Scripture questions. If by this is meant merely that it was not Christ's special work to declare the truth as to many literary questions connected with Scripture, or to settle some of the questions of Biblical criticism that have arisen, we at least raise no objection to this general position, so long as conclusions are not drawn from it contrary to Scripture fact or teaching. We believe that very often great injury has been done to Divine Revelation and Bible study by uncalled for and unwarrantable attempts to bring in Christ's authority to settle many such questions, inasmuch as it will generally be found exceedingly difficult to prove that He has given any indubitable utterance upon them. This is specially true in regard to questions as to the date, authorship, and method of

composition of the books of Scripture and such like. For, while it is true that, if any clear and indisputable cases of this kind can be produced, in which He has expressed His mind, we must regard His settlement of them as final to every Christian, and to all who own His infallibility or Divine authority as a teacher; yet it is, we believe, very rarely and sometimes only by very strained exegesis that this can be done. Signal disservice has been done to the cause of truth and the authority of Scripture by weak and unsuccessful attempts to bring in the authority of our Lord to settle such questions. No greater confusion could be brought into this question, and no greater injury done to the truth and authority of God's Word, than to confuse, as has been often so unwisely done, even by good and able men, such questions with the great fundamental question of the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Holy Writ; and to attempt to bring in the authority of Christ equally for both, as if they were one and identical. The questions are essentially different in kind; and while we may be unable to bring in Christ's authority fairly or successfully in such matters, and seldom, if ever, with such clearness and decisiveness as to put it beyond dispute, we can demonstrate, if the Word of God can prove anything, that we can appeal to His authority, with all the decisive and ineluctable finality that belongs thereto, for the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authoritativeness of all Scripture.

UNTRUE ALLEGATIONS AND FALSE INFERENCES.

But while this is true, if, by asserting that it was not Christ's work to settle questions about Scripture, it is meant that it was not part of His work to tell us what is the supreme standard of truth, and to teach us what is the character and authority of the book that God has given men to guide them from grace to glory, then this is simply contrary to fact. For this was a chief part of His work as a Teacher sent from God; what it was His special function to do as the Incarnate Word, who came not to destroy the written Word, but to expound and to fulfil it, and, by fulfilling it, to accomplish our salvation. It is what, as a matter of fact, He mainly did in all His teaching, working, and suffering (John 13¹); and, therefore, what He most solemnly,

emphatically, and repeatedly did, declaring Holy Scripture to be true, Divine, and eternally inviolable in every jot and tittle (Matt. 5¹⁸). Therefore, any argument based on this view of His mission in favour of His fallibility is simply fallacy founded on mistake! Nay more, one is amazed how any inference at all could be drawn in favour of such an assumption from such a basis.

Why, though it were as true as it is contrary to the truth, that it was not a part of Christ's work to tell us the truth as to the truthfulness and authority of the Word of God, the inference that He must therefore be liable to error in what He taught, is as unwarrantable and absurd as the assertion is untrue and anti-scriptural. There is, in fact, no necessary or natural, nor any connection whatever between the two things; nor a shadow of a shade of a foundation for the assumption—that if it were not part of Christ's work to teach the truth about Scripture, He must, or may, or did, therefore, err in what He taught about it. And the only way in which even the faintest show of plausibility could be put upon the supposition would be by postulating all the assumptions which have been exploded under the first ground as above. While the obvious fact that His whole work must have been vitiated, and rendered impossible, had He either taught error or not taught or known anything at all about the truthfulness and authority of the Word of God, shows the preposterousness of this whole theory.

ASSUMED THAT CHRIST EXPRESSED ONLY CURRENT OPINIONS ABOUT SCRIPTURE.

The *third* and last ground on which the errancy and error in Christ's teaching is averred is that He expressed simply the current belief of His times, and of the various persons or classes with whom He was dealing. If by this is meant merely that He often reasoned with men and sects on their own principles, and without sanctioning their errors or favouring their views in any way, then this appears to us not only not objectionable but true; for He, in cases not a few, seems evidently to have done this. In every particular case in which this is alleged, however, it must be shown, not merely assumed or asserted, that this is what Scripture represents Him as doing; for it is clearly unwarrantable to infer that because He did so in some cases He

did so in every case of alleged error to which He refers. In each case, therefore, this must be shown, not assumed, else it would lead to endless confusion, and prevent us knowing when He was uttering His own convictions and when the opinion of others. In many cases of discussion with others it can be shown that He was uttering, not merely their opinions, but His own too. In cases where He did simply reason with men on their own premises and principles, nothing is proved affecting His infallibility ; but only that He used a common and legitimate mode of *argumentum ad hominem* usual among all teachers and defenders of truth. It is, in fact, tantamount to saying that while, when reasoning with opponents, He assumed without approving of their opinions, so far as they were erroneous, yet in His own spontaneous teaching He taught no error, which is what we maintain.

Or if by this is meant that Christ's teaching took more or less the form and colour of the thought and language of His time and environment, then this, doubtless, is largely true, and was natural and even necessary if He was to use the best means of reaching the minds and hearts of those immediately taught. But this is, of course, quite compatible with His infallibility ; unless, indeed, it is assumed that He imbibed and gave as His own anything erroneous therein, which is what has to be proved, and which is precluded by all that has been adduced above. Or if, further still, by this is meant that He adapted His teaching to the needs and capacities of His hearers, then this also is unquestionably true. Indeed this was a signal and glorious characteristic of His teaching, by which He graciously taught them as they were able to bear and appreciate it. But surely it need scarcely be said that this is not inconsistent with perfect truthfulness and infallibility ; for while the teaching might not thus be given in its entirety, in its fullest developments, in its highest aspects or most perfect form, it manifestly might be all true so far as it went. Nay more, it was necessary it should be free from error if the full and perfect truth was afterwards to be based on it, or to grow out of it.

CONFUSION BETWEEN IMPERFECTION AND ERROR IN TEACHING.

Some, making great pretence of culture and advanced thought, seem incapable of distinguishing between imperfection or im-

maturity and error, or of perceiving the perfect consistency between entire truthfulness and relative imperfection in statement. They have, therefore, in their own immaturity curiously imagined that adaptation or limitation necessarily implied error in teaching. But those capable of such crudity and obtuseness are the last who should cant about culture; while, as for advanced thought, one wonders that it was never suggested to themselves to ask themselves whether they were ever born to be thinkers at all. But if by this is meant, as is usually meant, that Christ, though knowing the beliefs and opinions of these times to be erroneous, yet used them on a principle of accommodation as if they were true, and actually so far compromised and misrepresented the truth as to speak of and teach them as true when He knew them to be false; then we have only to reply that such a representation of Christ is simply revolting to every Christian mind, and if accepted would render faith in Him as a Teacher or a Saviour a moral impossibility. For it is a direct attack on the moral character of Christ, and amounts to a grave charge of deliberate misrepresentation against the God of truth; which, if true, stultifies further inquiry as to His teaching on any question of morality or religion, deprives it of any right to respect, far less authority, and renders it worthless because, on this theory, the teacher deliberately teaching error for truth in the name of God, would prove Himself destitute of the first principles of all religion and morality.

To attempt to justify or palliate this by pleading circumstances, or the serving of high spiritual ends, is to charge Him, whom even devils called "the Holy One of God," with acting on the damnable principle of doing evil that good might come; and to make the talk of high spiritual ends, reached by such means, an abomination in the sight of God and of all righteous men. And yet these are the men who talk largely about intellectual honesty, and prate presumptuously about moral integrity. Away with the daring blasphemy! It is an insult to the intellect of man. It is a libel on the character of God. It is an offence against the Majesty of the Most High. And with the men who dare to make it, further controversy would be degradation, folly, and sin.

CHAPTER V.

THE LOGICAL CONCLUSIONS AND MOMENTOUS ISSUES OF DENYING OR QUESTIONING CHRIST'S INFALLIBILITY.

BUT in closing this crucial Book it is well to review the course of this discussion up to this point, in order to realise precisely the position at which we have arrived, and to fearlessly follow out this unscriptural theory to its legitimate conclusion. We have seen, then, that our Lord stands by the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture ; and that His very words support many of the commonly received doctrines which have been assailed,—especially the Divine origin, truthfulness, and authority of Holy Scripture. This has immediately raised the fundamental question whether Christ is infallible as a teacher, specially in regard to the Word of God. Some anti-supernaturalists have answered this directly and assuredly in the negative,—on the avowed ground that Christianity, like all other religions, is merely a natural evolution of the religious instincts of men ; and Christ Himself a mere product thereof, around whom, as the highest type, has gathered a mass of legendary ideality embodied in the N.T. writings. Others, Rationalistic critics, have with equal assurance assumed, though not avowed, the negative, and proceeded ruthlessly to their conclusion that Scripture was in large and fundamental parts a mixture of myth and legend, literary fiction and pious fraud, pieced together for priestly gain and aggrandisement, utterly disregardful of what Christ said about it, as if He had no right to be heard on the question at all.

While a third class of critics of various shades, not openly or consciously unbelieving critics, but professedly Christian and in many respects believing critics, have, from diverse reasons

and on various grounds, answered this cardinal question in the negative also. Differing greatly and radically from the others in many things, they agree in denying Christ's infallibility as a Teacher. True, in contrast to the first class, they assert His supernatural origin and character, and even declare belief in His true Divinity; and unlike the second class, they do not ignore His teaching or deny Him any right to authority as a teacher. On the contrary, they readily ascribe highest honour and unique authority to Him as a religious teacher, speaking generally. Nay more, they would acknowledge the truthfulness, finality, and even the infallibility of His teaching in some things, yea, in many things perhaps, so long as He agrees with their ever-varying opinions. But they deny that in everything He was infallible as a teacher. They disown the finality of His teaching in various matters; and they explicitly declare and earnestly contend that He has actually erred and taught error in some things,—yea, declared as true what is contrary to the truth in some matters of a religious character,—even on the all-important and fundamental religious question as to the standard, source, and seat of authority in religion—the Word of God. Therefore, however much they may differ in many things from the others, they are at one with them generally in denying the infallibility and asserting the erroneousness of Christ as a teacher even in religious things, in the root and basal question of all religion and ethics.

THE TRUTHFULNESS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SCRIPTURE
AND OF CHRIST ARE INSEPARABLE, AND VARY AS EACH
OTHER.

Nor can they and their followers stop here. For they have not told definitely nor specifically in what things Christ is allowed to be infallible, nor how we can find these with certainty; nor by what infallible rule we can distinguish between the true and the false in Christ's teaching. They have not set forth in detail the errors of Him who is "The Truth," nor stated on what principle we can separate the wheat from the chaff in our Lord's teaching; nor have they produced any Scripture proof or authority for making any such distinction in the utterances of Him who declared so solemnly "Heaven and earth shall pass

away, but My words shall not pass away." They have simply asserted without proof, and in the face of most explicit statements of God's Word, and of an overwhelming array of evidence both from Scripture and reason to the contrary, the indefinite erroneousness of Christ's teaching; just as they assert the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture.

To this conclusion, indeed, they had to come; for since Christ stands by the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture in its integrity, the erroneousness of His teaching must on their theory obviously vary as the erroneousness of Scripture. By how much soever they deny the truthfulness, or damage the trustworthiness of Scripture, by so much they declare the untruthfulness, and proclaim the untrustworthiness of Christ as a teacher. And since the one is indefinite, so, therefore, is the other. So that the dogma they teach is the indefinite erroneousness and illimitable unreliability both of Scripture and of Christ. The doctrine we teach is the truthfulness and trustworthiness of both. They teach the indefinite erroneousness of both; for no one of them has ever given a detailed statement of the errors of either Scripture or Christ, and no two of them agree as to the errors they allege. On the contrary, they display an indefinite diversity, a diverting contrariety, and an ever-changing variety of opinion. They also teach an illimitable unreliability; for limit of truth or error has never been given by any of them, nor any definite principle of limitation, nor any infallible means of limiting the unreliability of Scripture or the untrustworthiness of Christ. In both the error and untrustworthiness are indefinite and indeterminate quantities, nor is it possible on these principles to limit them.

EACH MAN BECOMES JUDGE OF THE TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE
AND OF CHRIST, AND BECOMES A STANDARD TO HIMSELF.

Therefore, every one is left to himself to find out, without any sure principle or reliable guide, what in the teaching of Scripture and of Christ is false and untrustworthy, and what is true and reliable. Every man will therefore, and by a mental and moral necessity must, accept just as much or as little of the teaching of Christ and of Scripture as suits him, or none at all should he think fit. Since even they themselves are liable to

change, and often changing in their opinions and mental attitude, disbelieving at one time what they believed at another, their idea of the true and trustworthy in the teaching of Christ and of Scripture at one stage might be thought false and misleading at another, and it would of necessity vary with every variable man.

Nor could men on this principle ever be sure that they had infallibly arrived at what was the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,—unless, indeed, men had become insane enough to imagine that when they had disowned an infallible Bible, and rejected an infallible Christ, they could put absolute confidence in an infallible self! It would evidently be impossible on this basis to construct any general system of truth. For on the fundamental postulate of this theory men of various and variable minds could not, from the very nature of the case, agree, except on those deep, universal, and ineradicable instincts and intuitions common to mankind which existed independently of and prior to Christ and God's revelation. It would, of course, be irrational and absurd to attempt to convince anyone of error on the teaching of Christ; because, according to the first principles of this theory, there is either no infallible standard of truth, or no unerring way of ascertaining when His teaching is infallible. And even any teaching of Christ which might be thought true would have no intrinsic or independent authority because of coming from Him, but only such authority as each mind might choose to attribute to it for the time; that is, no real authoritativeness at all on this supposition.

In short, every man becomes a standard and authority to himself, and Christ is excluded from any authority as a religious teacher whatever:—*first*, because it is often doubtful whether Christ is speaking with authority, or only accommodating Himself to those with whom He speaks; and, *second*, because on their doctrine of the *indefinite* erroneousness of His teaching we cannot be sure whether, when He speaks with authoritativeness, His teaching is true or false. This bold, blasphemous, but irrational rationalism is the simple but inevitable result of this theory of the indefinite erroneousness of Christ's teaching.

IF CHRIST'S TEACHING THE TRUTH AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE IS DISOWNED, IT IS VAIN TO AVOW TRUST IN HIM OR IT IN OTHER THINGS.

But this is not all, by any means. For apart from the impossibility of being sure on this view as to whether what we have in any particular case is the true or the false in Christ's teaching, other more serious questions immediately arise, and other simply fatal and utterly destructive results inevitably follow. If Christ, speaking in the name of God, has taught us error on one or more subjects, how can we with absolute confidence trust His teaching on anything? If He erred in believing and declaring that the Scriptures are true, and that they cannot be broken or violated even in a single word (John 10³⁴), and that heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle can pass from them or fail to be fulfilled (Matt. 5¹⁸), then may He not have erred and taught error on every other subject? If He has misled us in some things, why may He not have misled us in everything? and how, at least, is it possible for us to disown His teaching in some things and trust it implicitly in others? Are we not warranted in distrusting Him in all He teaches, if in some things He has taught us error for truth with such assurance? Ought we not to disown altogether His infallibility and authority as a teacher when He has led us astray in anything, especially in such vital things? How can we be reasonably expected to believe Him in some things if He has deluded us in others? On what rational principle can we be asked to accept Him as a teacher at all if He has taught us error in such an authoritative manner on such a fundamental question? If, on such a distinctively religious and all-important subject as the sources of Divine help and the standard of Divine truth, He has so solemnly and emphatically declared as true what is the opposite of the truth, how can we rationally believe His teaching on anything, or put any confidence in His statements on any religious subject? If on this, which it was peculiarly and pre-eminently His duty and function, as the Light of the World and the Teacher sent from God, to know and to teach, He has erred and led men trusting in Him into error, how can earnest or reasonable men trust Him on any other question, or pay any regard to His teaching at all? Is not His authority and trustworthiness as a

teacher *ipso facto* destroyed? Is not confidence in His teaching necessarily annihilated? And is not faith in anything He says rendered impossible?

Nor is it of much moment in the present question how or why He led us into error, if we have been led into it. If He misled us by deception, like the false prophet teaching in the name of God as true what He knew to be false,—though it makes one shudder even to suppose this of the faithful and true Witness, “The Truth,”—then His veracity is annihilated, and it is worse than idle to inquire what He teaches on anything. If He misled us through ignorance, His authority and credibility as a teacher are equally destroyed. And may it not be reasonably urged that if He has erred in matters of Biblical criticism,—as some say, may He not also have erred in matters of history,—as others assert, and questions of science and philosophy,—as others declare, and on questions of morals,—as not a few with more plausibility maintain, and in religious subjects,—as some have been bold enough to contend,—in short, on every kind of thing? There is, in fact, no rational resting-place short of this if once Christ’s truthfulness, trustworthiness, and authority are impinged upon or violated in any way.

IF HE HAS ERRED AS TO THE WORD OF GOD, CAN HE BE THE SON OF GOD?

If He erred as to the character of the Word of God, may He not have also erred as to His claims to be the Son of God? For clear and decisive as His teaching as to His Divinity is, it is not so explicit, emphatic, and ineluctable as His teaching of the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the Word of God. If He has taught error in regard to Scripture itself, how can we believe that He has not taught error also as to salvation, redemption, God, man, life, death, resurrection, judgment, heaven, hell, time, eternity, everything contained in Scripture, everything most surely believed among us, mainly on His word? “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” If Christ is not absolutely trustworthy as a teacher, who is? what is? and where are we?

If making “exegetical mistakes,” as some scruple not to assert, maintaining and pressing the right of criticism “even

against the Lord Himself," as they phrase it, He has erred in the interpretation of the Scriptures He came to fulfil, because misreading them, misunderstanding them, and misapplying them, then how was it possible for Him to have fulfilled them? Yet He expressly declared that His whole life, teaching, death, and resurrection were on purpose to fulfil them. If in His "exegetical mistakes" and erroneous teaching He has gone astray and led us astray, is not Scripture still unfulfilled, His life-purpose therefore defeated, our redemption unaccomplished, and our faith vain? If, then, the written Word of God which He endorsed and sealed with His authority is not in its integrity true and trustworthy but indefinitely erroneous as alleged, and if the Incarnate Word of God is illimitably untrustworthy as a teacher and indefinitely erroneous in His teaching on the first and fundamental questions of all religion,—the source and standard of religious truth and the character and meaning of it,—then, verily, the foundations of all our faith and hope therein are destroyed, the sources of Divine help are vanished, and we are yet in our sins; and well might a benighted, befooled, and broken-hearted humanity raise a wailing deeper than Cassandra's for the credulity that might save us from despair.

IF CHRIST IS NOT INFALLIBLE IN TEACHING, WHO IS?

WHAT IS?

For if Scripture, the Word of God, is not truthful and trustworthy, notwithstanding its explicit claim to be so, and if Christ the Son of God has so solemnly endorsed this false and misleading claim, then, it is almost needless to say, we cannot rationally trust Him as a teacher in anything, much less rely on any teacher; while to put confidence in our own erring findings surely would be the climax of folly and irrationality. Having abandoned our infallible Bible and discredited an infallible Christ, it would be patent absurdity to rely on ever-errant human opinion, and the climax of folly to trust to an infallible self. On these suppositions the rejection of Christianity and Christ altogether is natural, necessary, and obligatory, and the adoption of agnosticism and unbelief right, reasonable, and requisite. And in the ultimate issue, the legitimate and

inevitable conclusion in religion from these premises is absolute scepticism, which is absolute nonsense, and makes the whole nature and history of mankind a delusion or a lie.

THE FINAL ISSUE—NO SEAT OF AUTHORITY IN RELIGION OR
ETHICS, AGNOSTICISM.

This, then, is the ultimate logical and inevitable conclusion to which every honest and consistent mind must come from the baseless but disastrous theory that Christ erred when He endorsed and emphasised the claim to truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority made by the Bible for itself. And yet those who advocate this theory are those who, with the air of superior knowledge and under the cant of advanced thought, imply, in their apparent incapacity of logical, consecutive thinking, and innocently imagine that men can still honour Christ as a religious teacher after they believe that He has taught them error on the fundamental religious questions of Scripture and of all religion. They can even fancy in their simplicity that honest and intelligent men will adopt their hybrid theory, and stop short of carrying it out to its only legitimate termination from their allegations and principles,—which is to reject Christ as a teacher altogether, and regard Him as a deceiver or deceived, either of which is equally fatal to His claim to be a teacher on such things at all.

Ay! they are actually capable in their vanity, credulity, and absurdity of presenting this bastard imbecility to the adoption of the advanced intelligence of our thoughtful and sceptical young men near the close of this enlightened nineteenth century! Had the century been in its dotage, as some think it is, when so many crudities and absurdities seem so readily conceived and credited rather than the truth, one could the better understand this temerity and credulity. But that it should seriously and confidently be propounded in the name of advanced thought, superior intelligence, and rational religion, is only another illustration that there is nothing too untenable and absurd for the modern vaunters of breadth and freedom to father and to swear by. Superior intelligence, advanced thought, rational religion, breadth, and freedom,—why, these things have been too long the boast of mere pretenders to the names. Superior intelligence!

Why, what is the intellect of that young man worth who has not courage or brains enough to carry out these principles to their legitimate conclusion—the rejection of Christianity, and the adoption of Agnosticism, or absolute Scepticism?

Advanced thought! Why, the man that believes that Christ, coming in the name of God, and claiming to speak only the Word of God, and to be veritably the Son of God and the equal of God, taught error for truth on such primary and fundamental religious questions, and that would not, therefore, feel himself mentally and morally constrained to advance a little farther, and to reject Christ as an authoritative religious teacher altogether, and to regard Him as a deceiver or deceived, might surely ask himself whether he was born to think at all.

Rational religion! Why, the person who rejects the authoritative teaching of Him who called Himself The Truth and the Word of God on the inviolability of the Scriptures which He came to expound and fulfil, and who charges the supreme religious Teacher of the world with teaching untruth in declaring the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of the source and standard of truth, and yet does not despair of finding finality, and see the absurdity of certainty in any religious question, could scarcely do a more rational thing than to question his own rationality. It has long been evident to minds that think things through that it must be Christ or none, Christ infallible and trustworthy in everything or in nothing.

And as for this tall talk about breadth of thought and freedom of faith, why, it is not breadth but narrowness, not freedom but bondage, not thought but cant. For whenever we leave the Divine breadth of the Word of God and limit the infinite horizons of the Son of God, we inevitably become environed by the narrowness and shallowness of the thoughts and vagaries of puny man, and enthrall ourselves amid the conflicting and belittling asseverations of human opinion. Having abandoned the Sun of Righteousness, we walk in the sparks of our own kindling till, "in wand'ring mazes lost," we find that we have lost both our freedom and our faith, and might well lose our reason too, as contemplating the confusions and confictions of human philosophies and religions, and, like Milton's angel peering out to ascertain

“the secrets of the hoary deep” amid the babbling sounds,
we see

“A dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth, and height,
And time and place are lost; where Eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy amid the noise
Of endless wars, and *by confusion stand.*”

NOTE.—On the union of the Divine and the human in the Person of our Lord, and its relation to His teaching and action, Principal Rainy makes the following careful and suggestive statement: “There is evidence enough that our Lord’s human speech and action proceeded from One who was never less or other than the Eternal Son of God. But there is no evidence that His human speech and action proceeded from any immediate principle other than a human consciousness—that is, from human faculties or capacities; the human nature being participant of all knowledge of His own and His Father’s being that befitted His Person and work,—yet participant always in a manner proper to human nature.”—*Critical Review*, April 1892, p. 120.

BOOK III.

THE *STATUS QUESTIONIS*. THE BIBLE CLAIM AND PRELIMINARY PROOF.



CHAPTER I.

GENERAL MISCONCEPTIONS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS. OPPOSITE EXTREMES. THE ULTIMATE ISSUES.

WE have listened to the voice of the Lord, declaring the truthfulness and inviolability of the Word of the Lord, in its fulness and integrity. We have shown that His decision must be received as authoritative and final, else authority and finality in religion is an irrationality and an impossibility, and agnosticism or unbelief an obligation and a necessity. We have now, before adducing the full proof from all Scripture and corroborative evidence of the main position, to set forth definitely and precisely what that position is. For in this as in most questions the proper statement of the question is the virtual settlement of it, or at least a long advance towards settlement, and is an essential preliminary to even an approach to settlement.

PREVALENCE OF MISCONCEPTION AND MISREPRESENTATION CONFUSING THE ISSUES AND THE DIVERSE DEFENDERS.

I question if in the whole history of theological controversy any subject has ever been so often mistaken, so strangely misconceived, or so greatly misrepresented. Therefore, countless confusions, innumerable irrelevancies, and interminable

controversies and side issues have been introduced, which have obscured the real issue, and prevented thorough discussion of the fundamental question. Earnest but unwise defenders of the truthfulness of Scripture have taken up extreme and untenable positions, and have sought support for these from arguments and principles themselves invalid or vulnerable; so that when these have been refuted, and the positions proved untenable, it has appeared as if the truth itself were overthrown or imperilled. Signal disservice has thus been done to the Word of God and the cause of truth by those who have mistaken extremeness for strength of position.

On the other hand, eager assertors of the erroneousness of Scripture have manifested a marvellous obtuseness in recognising the question at issue. They have disclosed amazing misconceptions of the true issue. They have displayed a wondrous ingenuity in evading a straight, serious discussion of the real question. They have evinced a provoking fertility in raising side issues, as if really afraid to face the main issue. They have betrayed a significant unwillingness to come to the point and to state the question, as if dreading a thorough discussion thereof from suspected weakness of their own position. They have persistently avoided grappling with the proofs of the true position, as if conscious of their inability to answer them.

Hence, frequently all the defenders of the infallible truth and Divine authority of Scripture, from the extremest and weakest to the wisest and strongest, have been classed together, as if there were no difference between them. Arguments that might have some validity against extreme and untenable positions, but which have absolutely no force or bearing on the positions of the wiser defenders, have been recklessly, irrelevantly, and unfairly hurled against the whole as if they were equally valid against them all. Thus they have sought to heap ridicule upon the true and scriptural position by unjustly mixing all together and associating with it foolish fancies excluded by it. Numberless repeatedly repudiated absurdities—such as that old bogle of the alleged inspiration of the Hebrew vowel points—have been attributed to them, as if the writers did not know that such views do not exist, and were never held by the real upholders of the Bible claim. Most jejune and ludicrous misconceptions have been ascribed to them which never existed except in the crude imaginations of

those who had the folly to conceive them and the perversity to repeat them, and which in lack of better arguments served the purposes of popular ridicule.

MISLEADING TERMS AND PREJUDICIAL EPITHETS.

The defenders of the truth have often been superciliously spoken of as if they knew nothing, by those by no means themselves overburdened with either learning or logic, insight or depth, though pretentious enough to imply that wisdom was born and was likely to die with them ! Prejudice against the truth has often been created by representing the defenders of the claim of Scripture as narrow or behind the age ; because, forsooth ! they refused to be drawn down from the Divine breadth and eternal advancedness of God's Word to the narrow, fragmentary phases of ephemeral human opinion,—the authors not knowing that the best Biblical scholarship of the world in this as in every age is against them, and in favour of the Scripture claim to infallible truth and Divine authority.

Finding it easier to ridicule or caricature than to refute the truth, unscrupulous caricatures, easily exploded, have been fabricated, which have been palmed off as refutations of our views upon the ignorant and unwary ; and which sometimes even the assailants themselves seem to have been innocent enough to imagine were demonstrations. Instead of honest, serious argument against the formidable array of Scripture proof adduced, patent misrepresentations of the Bible claim have, after repeated exposure and protest, been tenaciously persisted in. These have prevented thorough discussion of the real question in the light of the proper evidence, and have largely hindered a satisfactory settlement of it on the proper grounds. Vague phrases, misleading terms, stereotyped expressions—such as verbal inspiration, plenary inspiration, mechanical inspiration, dynamical inspiration, inerrancy, literal infallibility—have continued to be used and abused to the detriment of the truth. They have often no definite meaning, because different persons use them in different senses. As they often substitute a vague phrase for a definite idea, by this means they only gloss over crucial questions and evade the real issues.

Many of these, along with such other weak but abusive

epithets as "cast-iron theory,"¹ "metallic traditionalism," etc. etc., have, for want of better arguments, been contemptuously hurled against the true Bible position in order to discredit its defenders—on the noble principle of giving a dog a bad name in order to get rid of him. Through confusions, or under hallucinations, ten thousand times refuted objections have been readduced as if they had never been exploded; while the solid mass of positive Scripture proof they have never yet seriously faced, and the massive array of unanswered, because unanswerable, argument produced in support of it has been prudently but most cravenly passed by—

"For when they did behold the same,
They wondering would not stay;
But being troubled at the sight,
They thence did haste away."

INADMISSIBLE AND INVALID ARGUMENTS USED.

Arguments have been used against our position which, if they had any validity at all, were equally valid against their own position; and were, therefore, illegitimately used by them against ours, while they had no validity at all against our distinctive position. They were therefore not only illegitimate as used by them, but were also irrelevant altogether to the real issue; and were simply self-stultifying and self-destructive in our controversy with them. Yet they seem incapable of seeing this, or lack courage to confess it. It is vital, therefore, if we are ever to reach the real decisive discussion, and to weigh the full and proper evidence on the question, to clear away the prevalent confusions and misconceptions, caricatures and misrepresentations, assumptions and assertions; and then to put the real *status questionis*, then to produce the proper and complete evidence, and finally to consider the ultimate issues. The very doing of this will be valuable, and is much needed in itself, and will be a further refutation of the Rationalistic theories and a positive confirmation of the Bible claim,—a *real preliminary proof*.

¹ Dr. Horton.

CHAPTER II.

MISCONCEPTIONS AND CONFUSIONS.

I. CONFUSING QUESTIONS OF CANONICITY WITH THE TRUTH AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE. OPPOSITE EXTREMES.

ONE of the first and most misleading misconceptions on this subject has been confounding the Canon, and questions about the Canon, with the true doctrine of Scripture, as if identical with, or vital to, the inspiration or infallibility of the Bible. The importance of the question of the Canon to the question of inspiration has been exaggerated and misconceived by two opposing parties, who represent the opposite extremes on the main question. Some of the ultra-Conservatives have foolishly maintained that it was essential to the infallible truth and Divine authority of the Bible to hold that every book in the received Canon, with every item and iota thereof, should be regarded as the infallible Word of God ; and that the slightest impingement on the absolute infallibility and Divine authority of any book, or part thereof, is tantamount to a denial of the Divine inspiration and authority, truthfulness and trustworthiness of Holy Writ. On the other hand, Rationalists who deny its truthfulness and trustworthiness greatly exaggerate the dependence of the question of inspiration on the question of the Canon, and assert that it is impossible to settle the true doctrine of the one until we have first definitely settled the other.

REFUTATION OF THE ORTHODOX EXTREME.

Both are wrong, because both extreme. In refutation of the first it is sufficient to adduce the fact that nowhere in Scripture

itself have we a catalogue or statement of the writings that compose the Canon. Therefore it is impossible to claim Divine authority for the inclusion of every separate book now generally received as part of Holy Scripture. However clearly it can be shown from the Bible itself that for every Scripture inspired of God infallible truth and Divine authority are claimed, yet you cannot from the Bible itself authoritatively determine precisely what these writings are. This is largely a question of criticism and of Christian testimony, and at most only carries the weight that belongs to the evidence for canonicity in each case. And though it were to be shown that the balance of evidence was rather against than in favour of including some books—say, Esther or Ecclesiastes from the O.T., or James and 2 Peter from the N.T.,—though we by no means imply this in quoting them,—yet this would not and should not in the least affect our doctrine of the infallibility and Divine authority of all the Scriptures that are inspired.

Nor can anything be more prejudicial or disastrous to the real Bible claim, or more suicidal to the interests of the truth of the religion of the Bible, than to stake the whole cause of its truthfulness and Divine authority upon the question of the canonicity of a particular book ; or even so to connect the one with the other as to imply that the questions were identical or vitally connected.

The questions are, in fact, essentially different in kind. The one is founded on or adduced from the explicit teaching and pervasive claim of the Word of God. The other is at best, in some cases at least, a matter of human opinion, upon which even believing men may honestly differ. And in any case, the truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture as a whole would not be affected one iota by any decision, however adverse, as to the canonicity of such books, or of any particular book ; because the same claim would be found in its integrity in the others.

EXPOSURE OF RATIONALISTIC EXTREME.

This, too, is in substance the answer to the Rationalists of the opposite extreme. They, in order the better to discredit the testimony of Scripture to its own supernatural inspiration,—with consequent infallibility and Divine authority,—magnify and

exaggerate the dependence of these questions on the question of the canonicity of the separate books. They then seek to minimise the number of undoubtedly canonical books ; next, attempt to isolate each separate book as much as if they never had any connection ; and, finally, interrogate each book for its individual testimony on these questions.

But it is a vain device. For, *first*, the books refuse to be thus isolated. Scripture distinctly declines to be so fragmented. It is a unique Divine unity, articulated, interpenetrated, and so pervaded by one homogeneous system of truth, permeated by one superhuman life, and breathing one Divine spirit, that it cannot be thus partitioned and emasculated without violating the first principles of scientific interpretation, and traversing every sound canon of literary criticism.¹ The general testimony of the whole must therefore be received for its various parts ; for it is one living, growing, God-created organism, in which each part is so related to the others, and develops out of and grows with all the others, as to form one complete living whole, in which every part performing its special function strengthens and supports the rest. That testimony is unequivocally given for the truthfulness and Divine authority of all the writings in the category of Holy Scripture, until it is proved that any do not belong to it.

Second. Even though the canonical books were limited to those books that the most Rationalistic criticism would limit them to, it would make no substantial difference as to the claim of Holy Scripture to be the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority. For the doctrine taught in them on this is the same as in the others.

Third. Many of the separate books whose claim to canonicity is most beyond dispute, teach most explicitly this doctrine of the truthfulness and authoritativeness of Scripture. Yea, it may be all in substance found in single fragments of the Divine Book. For every part and particle of it being God-breathed, testifies of God, some in the most explicit and emphatic way. As a single fragment of a bone could so speak to the mind of the great naturalist Owen that he could tell the body of which it was part, and even construct it in its integrity ; so every part and fragment of the Divine Word so spoke to the spiritual mind, and so breathed with God, that it was not often difficult to feel assured

¹ Bishop Westcott.

that it belonged to the God-breathed body of the Divine Word. Therefore it is vain to try to stifle the testimony of Scripture to its own inspiration by attempting the disintegration of Scripture. The very attempt to do so, as well as the magnifying of the importance of the canonicity of the separate books, in relation to the truth and Divine authority of Scripture as a whole, manifests a strange confusion of thought, and of things radically distinct, —ill-befitting pretenders to superior illumination and logical acumen, and displays such a misconception of the real nature of the cardinal question as only the obtuseness and perversity of prejudice seem sufficient to explain.

2. CONFUSION OF TRANSLATIONS WITH THE ORIGINAL SCRIPTURES.

A second and even a silly misconception (for there is nothing too absurd to have been stated or imagined on this question) is that infallibility and Divine authority are predicated of the various translations of God's Word by those who maintain its truth and authority. But surely this absurdity might sleep now in the face of the notorious fact that no two versions are identically the same, and that some of them vary considerably in details, as seen even in the differences between the English Authorised and Revised Versions, not to speak of more decided differences, as between the Protestant and Romish, or between some ancient and modern versions. The reckless and dogmatic assertors of the erroneousness of Scripture might have passed by this puerility, and not have so exposed their poverty of arguments by attempting to father this absurdity upon the intelligent defenders of God's Word.

It is of the Scriptures in the original languages, and of these alone, that they have ever predicated infallible truth or Divine authority. Any contrary assertions or implications are the result of amazing ignorance of the first principles and tritest elementary facts of the question, or are wilful perversions of them. Yet no tender or doubting one that cannot read the original languages, need be troubled by this fact, as though the Bible in their mother tongue were untrustworthy. Quite the reverse is the truth. They are all substantially correct; and for all practical purposes any recognised version is in substance sufficiently correct and reliable. But since many of the alleged discrepancies

on which the assailants of the truthfulness of Scripture have based their opposition to its trustworthiness vanish by a more correct rendering of the original, it is necessary, though humiliating amid the vaunted intelligence of our day, to emphasise the fact that it is only of the Scriptures in the original languages of which infallible truth and Divine authority are predicated or predicable.

3. MISTAKING THE SCRIPTURES IN THE ORIGINAL TONGUES FOR THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS.

Another cognate, and much more common and most misleading misconception, is that it is of the original Scriptures *as we have them* that infallibility and authoritativeness are asserted. Many critics, bent upon assailing the inerrancy and establishing the erroneousness of Scripture, have hastened to show and assert that the Scriptures as in the original languages are erroneous, and are therefore so far untrustworthy; and contend that the doctrine of their truthfulness and trustworthiness is thus disproved by the original Scriptures in our possession. But in doing this they exhibit various strange confusions and inconsistencies.

First. They confound the Scriptures in the original languages with the Scriptures as originally given. We have the Scriptures in the original tongues, but we do not have them as originally given. The distinction is vital, and accounts for much. The Bible writings, like all other ancient writings, are subject to the vicissitudes of time, and the liabilities to corruption through successive transcriptions during many ages, in many lands, by many copyists. True, by the vast multiplication of manuscripts, and the numerous early versions, and, above all, by the intense interest and vital concern in the matters of salvation of which the Bible is the sole repository, the margin of errancy was reduced to a minimum, and the securities for accuracy in copying reached such a degree of certainty as no other ancient writings approach to. Nevertheless, there still remained a liability to err; and as a matter of fact errors have crept into the fringe of Scripture. Nor could it be otherwise save by perpetual miracle. And though God has guarded His word "by a singular care and providence,"¹ He has nowhere promised to preserve its absolute

¹ Westminster Confession of Faith.

integrity by supernatural means, nor has He in actual fact done so. The large number of various readings settles this. And therefore it is only of the Scriptures as originally given, as they came from the inspired writers, that any intelligent advocate maintains infallibility or Divine authority. This fact, though frequently pointed out, has been persistently ignored by the advocates of the erroneousness of Scripture; nor has its importance been sufficiently realised and insisted on by the defenders of its truthfulness. And yet the distinction made is all-important in this controversy, and accounts for much that is otherwise difficult, if not impossible to explain.

VALUABLE RESULTS OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND EXEGESIS.
INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS NULLIFIES BOTH.

For, in the *Second* place, these Rationalistic critics have undervalued, and failed to give due weight to the results and principles of Textual Criticism. No wonder, for on their principles of an indefinitely erroneous, and therefore of an indefinitely uninspired Scripture, neither the original text nor the correct exegesis of it are of any great importance. For, if even the very original text were arrived at, and though the true meaning of it were ascertained, it would still be, on their main principles, indefinitely untrustworthy and untruthful. So that on this view, in Textual Criticism and Exegesis, Othello's occupation is gone, or of little moment. For, surely, it is not of much consequence either to search for or to expound what is in its very nature and substance indefinitely erroneous and untrustworthy.

But neither Exegesis nor Textual Criticism, which have engaged the life of the best Biblical and theological scholarship of the world in all ages, will consent to be thus unceremoniously set aside to meet the exigencies and suit the assumptions of an irrational rationalism,—especially as it pretends to base its contention upon the Scriptures as we have them. For, unquestionably, in the course of ages the original text has been more or less altered through processes of mistranscription, interpolation, corruption, and transposition. And although it might be said with Bentley that no important doctrine or fact has been really affected thereby, so that no humble believer of the Bible need be afraid of the overthrow of his faith thereby, yet the various

readings were many years ago reckoned at 30,000, and now number at least 100,000 or more.

DISCREPANCIES VANISHING QUANTITIES.

And what Textual Criticism in its long, learned labours has done is to eliminate many errors, and to limit much the area of uncertainty as to the original text, and has thus largely removed many of the apparent discrepancies by which the opponents of the truthfulness of Scripture have sought to give plausibility to their theories. In fact, many alleged errors that were seemingly inexplicable before, as the result of wider collation of MSS., thorough study of the text, and otherwise, have vanished. Still more, they have given us the principle of a vanishing quantity which has been largely strengthened and confirmed from other cognate or collateral studies ; so that we may reasonably hold that with longer study, and fuller research, and larger knowledge, they might probably all vanish, or only such trifling discrepancies and difficulties remain as are incident to all subjects of human knowledge. The tendency and result have beyond question been to reduce their number and to lessen their importance, and thus to warrant the belief and justify the conviction that if we only knew all they would probably all disappear.¹ And certainly the established results have been such as to render it irrational and impossible, logically, for Rationalism, in the face of them, to assert that they would not, or could not, all vanish. That is, it ought logically to silence, if not to convince them ; and thus rationally leave the full weight of the positive evidence from the whole trend, the pervading tone, the explicit teaching, and the entire mass of corroborative facts and phenomena, to prove, as they have ever done, to the satisfaction of every section of the Christian Church until this hour, that, as the Bible itself claims, *all* or every Scripture being God-breathed is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority ; and is therefore “ profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ” (2 Tim. 3¹⁶). And it is just because Rationalism in all its forms and phases has, through bigoted prejudice, failed to recognise and own this, and stubbornly shut its eyes to the proved results of Biblical and other scholarship in these direc-

¹ See below.

tions, that it has violated the first principles of the inductive philosophy and the prime canons of literary criticism, and deserves the repudiation and contempt of every scientific student of Scripture, and of every candid and consistent mind. For it exhibits in its worst forms that crude dogmatism and traditionalism against which it belches forth such blustering but self-destructive rage.

THE IMPREGNABLE POSITION OF THE UPHOLDERS OF THE BIBLE CLAIM.

For, in the *Third* place, through failing to recognise the important distinction between the Scriptures in the original languages and the Scriptures as originally written, and by shutting their eyes to the true results of Textual or other Criticism, making many of the alleged discrepancies and difficulties by which they bolstered their untenable contention disappear as baseless imaginations, these irrational Rationalists have failed to realise that the defenders of the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture as originally given, have, by the results of Textual Criticism and other cognate and corroborative research, been placed in practically an impregnable position. Since the original manuscripts of Holy Scripture are not now in our possession, and since the result of approaching nearer to them by various learned research, along with cognate study, has been to dispel many discrepancies, remove many difficulties, and pulverise many of the supposed most formidable objections to the infallible truth and Divine authority of Scripture, and to strongly confirm its truth and even its minute accuracy,¹ it follows inevitably—

First. It is impossible to prove that the alleged errors, on which they avowedly but unwarrantably found their theory of the erroneousness of Scripture, were in the original; therefore it is impossible to disprove the Bible claim to truth and reliability. Therefore the position of those who maintain this claim is practically impregnable, and they may well sit calmly amid the rage of furious onsets and smile at all their foes.²

Second. It not only demonstrates the impossibility of dis-

¹ See any of the countless books on this subject, and specially the *Evidence of the Monuments*. See Appendix.

² See Book V.

proving the Bible claim, but it establishes the probability of it, in the light of the difficulties removed by research; and as Butler has well taught, "Probability is the guide of life": and it creates for those willing to learn a moral obligation to belief and action as real and decisive as actual certainty.

Third. Therefore it is much more rational and scientific to affirm than to deny the truthfulness and authority of Scripture as originally given.

RATIONALISTIC THEORIES OF THE GOSPELS CONFIRM THE BIBLE CLAIM.

Fourth. Rationalism itself, by its own explicit but inconsistent teaching, gives additional confirmation to the position. For it teaches two significant things:—*First*, that we not only have not the original Scriptures, but that we have not anything that can by any literary licence be properly called copies of them. That, for example, in the Gospels, specially St. John, we are not only without the original writings, but what we have are not strictly even second or third hand copies of them, and are at best second or third hand compilations or compositions made by the aid of them, along with other misleading materials, mingled with the reigning philosophic and religious ideas of the times or of the writers,—some saying not earlier than the second century, or well through it;¹ and even the Ritschlians, though mostly placing the N.T. writings practically in the first century, yet hold that the apostolic materials are mixed with other misleading matter, and misarranged.² And all the possible permutations and combinations as to theories of their origin and composition have, with bewildering and astounding, if not amusing rapidity, passed in succession across the firmament of Rationalistic criticism like wintry clouds across stormy skies, departing, not, alas! never to return, but only to reappear in some other form, or modification, or combination, as the whirligig of restless criticism rushes on in its ceaseless and uncertain cyclations to the amazement and amusement of all sensible men.

Second. That, nevertheless, the Gospels are substantially, or

¹ See Weiss, *Introduction to N. T.*; Dr. Martineau's *Seat of Authority in Religion*; Pfeleiderer, and others like.

² Harnack, Wendt, etc.

in general drift and main substance, true and reliable. While we do not commit ourselves to any of these diverse and diverting theories, we accept them meantime as their own statements of their positions, in order to show how they, in their contrast, contrariety, and inconsistency, support the true position. If, as they allege, the Gospels as we have them are substantially true, or give the general trend and main substance of the teaching of Christ and His apostles ; then, in these substantially true Gospels, we undertake to demonstrate that they teach our doctrine of the truthfulness and authoritativeness of Scripture, from their whole trend and tone, their explicit statements, and their diversified phenomena. And if the Gospels we have are so far removed and different from the original Gospels, then, that is surely more than sufficient to account for the creeping in of those alleged discrepancies of which they make so much. Thus, if their own first position be true, they should make nothing of these discrepancies, since they are only what we should on their view expect, and what must of necessity arise in Gospels originally infallible. So that their own fundamental critical positions are only confirmation of our doctrine, and the most thorough refutation of their own.

THE APOLOGETIC AND PRACTICAL VALUE OF DISTINGUISHING BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL AND THE PRESENT SCRIPTURES.

But it may be answered, what is the use of a theory about original documents no longer in our possession, when the Scriptures we have are full of discrepancies and difficulties? Is it not a dead doctrine about lost documents, and idle discussion as to perished parchments? We reply :—*First*, that these have been, to say the least, immensely exaggerated, even in the Scriptures as we have them. Many of them appear to have been created where they do not exist. Others are all too evidently the product of fertile imaginations, where the wish was father to the thought. Some alleged are so ludicrous as to make reasonable men smile, and wonder by what mental idiosyncrasy any man could have imagined they were discrepancies at all. Of those remaining most of them admit of a probable, and all of them of a possible, explanation ;—and a possible explanation is all that is logically required to silence any

objection arising from them. There are few, if any, that may not be sufficiently accounted for by the peculiar circumstances, only such as might be expected from the nature of the case.

But, *Second*, the Scriptures we have, our only guide to salvation, have come from them; and therefore nothing affecting them can be idle or indifferent to us because it affects the title-deeds of our redemption and salvation.

THE SCRIPTURES AS WE HAVE THEM ARE SUBSTANTIALLY TRUE AND TRUSTWORTHY.

And, *Thirdly* and mainly, the Scriptures we have are at least, even on the testimony of opponents, in main substance and effect a trustworthy record of the original, or are these in substance; and from those we learn that they claim to be the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority. Therefore it is vital to maintain that claim; because on the truth of that claim is based the truthfulness and trustworthiness of all the things belonging to our eternal salvation. If that claim is false, our faith is vain; and everything most surely believed among us perishes, and with them all our hopes for eternity and all our consolations in time.

If anything invalidates or weakens that foundation, the whole superstructure of our faith is thereby weakened and endangered, discredited, if not destroyed. Anything that appears to impinge on that position is, therefore, rightly regarded with suspicion and concern. It is just because the apparent discrepancies of the Scriptures, as we have them, have been misused to assail, and if possible to destroy, the fundamental position, that it becomes not only relevant but vital to distinguish between the Scriptures as they are now and as they were originally given, and to emphasise that it is only for these last that infallible truth and Divine authority are claimed. It is therefore not of little but of eternal moment to maintain that claim, because they make that claim, and base on it all their other claims on the faith and obedience of men. And since the apparent discrepancies that may have crept into the Scriptures, as we have them, are only such as might be expected to arise from errors of transcription, the nature of the writings, and the vicissitudes of time, they only serve to confirm the claim of the original writings.

We thus maintain the claim of Scripture in its integrity as to the original writings, and we make all reasonable allowance and explanation for discrepancies arising. We thus meet all the requirements of both faith and criticism; while by upholding and establishing the substantial truth and trustworthiness of our present Scriptures, we conserve all the sacred interests of practical piety. One is, therefore, amazed to find any believer in Revelation ignoring or undervaluing a distinction that serves to reconcile the claims of faith and science. The difference is immense from every point of view between Scriptures originally erroneous, and Scriptures originally true and trustworthy, but becoming more or less discrepant by transmission from various causes subsequently.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DISTINCTION TO THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF SCRIPTURE AND OF PRACTICAL RELIGION.

From the standpoint of scientific study it makes all the difference between paralysis and inspiration. For in studying the Scriptures, believing them to have been originally true, because Divinely inspired, the earnest student is under the strongest stimulus and highest motives to search for the original as through the inspiring Spirit it came pure and living from the mouth of the Lord. But who would care to inquire or sacrifice much to ascertain an original believed to have been originally erroneous? In the one case the search is for the Word of God through which we have eternal life, like silver seven times purified, more precious than the gold of Ophir. In the other case it is largely only for the errant words of erring men—at best a dubious search for doubtful and comparatively worthless things. In the one it is a hopeful search for the very truth of God, most precious and most pure. In the other it is a heartless quest for, at best, a mixture of truth and error, without the possibility of certain separation. So that, by the one Biblical study is placed under the most potent stimulation, by the other it is laid under the most hopeless paralysis.

From the viewpoint of practical religion, too, a Bible believed to be originally true, because inspired of God, is received with deepest reverence as the Word of God, even if discrepancies may have subsequently crept into the margin of it; and all the moral and spiritual benefits of it will in that attitude and spirit be

likely to be realised. But a Bible believed to have been originally an undistinguishable compound of error and truth, with no certain means of thorough separation, will place the reader of it in the attitude of a sceptical critic instead of a sympathetic and reverential believer; and he will, therefore, of necessity lose its best spiritual effects. From the standpoint of faith the one will naturally lead to confidence and assurance, and to that personal experience of the truth as it is in Scripture which no unbelief can disturb. The other will easily lead to scepticism, as it logically lands in agnosticism. And from the position of Apologetics, as will appear fully below, the one is strong and impregnable, and has proved itself good against all the assaults of unbelief for nineteen hundred years. The other is demonstrably weak and indefensible, and would not avail a single day, on their principles, against the well-directed attack of intelligent scepticism seizing dexterously the positions so unwisely given them, and using powerfully the weapons foolishly placed in their hands by the errorists.

4. CONFUSION BETWEEN QUESTIONS OF AUTHORSHIP AND THE TRUTH AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

Another misconception that has led to much confusion, bitter controversy, and needless alarm is identifying or connecting questions of authorship of books with the prime question of the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture. Now these questions are different in kind. They do not lie in the same plane. The last is the first and supreme question, and lies at the basis of all our faith. The others are subordinate, and belong to a lower category. In the one there can be no confusion or uncertainty, else all is shaken or undermined. In the others, conflicting and even contradictory views may be held without sensibly, if at all, affecting the foundations. The one is, from its very nature, clearly a vital matter of faith, in which the most momentous interests of all believers are at stake. The others are evidently matters of literary criticism, in which no vital interests are generally concerned.

No doubt there may be cases in which, when truly interpreted, the authorship of a Bible book, or part of it, is so unequivocally and inevitably declared in Scripture as to involve,

in the denial of it, the question of the truth, reliability, and authority of the Word of God. But that is rarely, if ever, demonstrable; and there is always, or almost always, a possible explanation, which might be held to evade the raising of that cardinal question. Generally it cannot be seriously raised at all in connection with questions of authorship. While on all such matters we are bound not to accept the supposed results of criticism except upon sufficient evidence in each case, and it is often miserably weak and changeful, such as no sensible man would act on in practical life; and while we should scrupulously examine and warily entertain anything that seems to question the truth or infallibility of God's Word: yet the questions are themselves essentially different in kind.

There could not be a greater mistake apologetically than to identify them. Nor could there be any more signal disservice done to God's Word, and to the faith of God's elect, than to confuse them, or to appear to place them on the same level,—as has, alas! too often been done by unwise defenders of the faith,—sometimes by those of whom wiser things might have been expected. Into all such literary questions criticism has undoubtedly a right fearlessly, if reverently, to inquire; and faith never appears so strong and brave, nor the truth so assured and Divine, as when she frankly owns and encourages this; and boldly challenges all her foes to search her every record, and examine all her credentials.

All the more is this so that in many cases there may be, and there doubtless are, original and later authorships of substantially the same book. The original author may give the main substance, or the chief materials, or the first principles or germs. The later author or authors, whether editor, chronicler, compiler, or recaster, developing, adding to, utilising, or recasting the materials, principles, or germs, may give them in ways that make the final forms very different from the original, and yet be essentially the same in substance, principles, or ideas, so that it might still retain, according to ancient literary usage, the original name. This, which is reasonable in itself, and apparently accordant with the facts of the literary history of some of the Bible books, takes the force out of much of the hostile criticism which has assailed the Word of God. There are few things more important to the defenders of it than to recognise and

utilise it in the defence of the faith. And those good and earnest souls who have trembled for the Word of the Lord when some traditional, and perhaps true or substantially sound views of the authorship of Bible books, or portions of them, have been assailed or unsettled by criticism should—*First*, carefully distinguish between believing and unbelieving critics—between avowed Rationalists who deny Revelation and the supernatural, and therefore attack Scripture on purely rationalistic principles; and those Christian critics who, while agreeing with them in many literary questions and some critical results, hold the supernatural, and believe the Bible to be a Divine Revelation—the Word of God. *Second*. They should be calm in the confidence that a better and truly higher, because more scientific and profound criticism will in due time correct the other criticism so far as its results are untrue; as has so often been done, as was so effectually done by our greatest N.T. scholars in the thorough overthrow of the false unbelieving criticism of the Gospels and the N.T. generally; and as is now being done as to many of the supposed results of rationalistic criticism of the O.T., both by archaeological research, and truer, juster, more thorough Biblical study. *Third*. They ought eagerly to grasp and vigorously to press this fact of earlier and later forms of essentially the same substance or principles developed and adapted to later times, to preserve the chief things, to conserve the fundamental position; and to leave the subordinate questions of origin, authorship, mode of composition to the usual course of critical discussion,—so long as they do not invade and destroy the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of God's Word. In short, those true and saving results of criticism should be utilised for the destroying of destructive criticism.

5. QUESTIONS OF DATE AND METHOD OF COMPOSITION CONFOUNDED WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION.

Questions of date and methods of composition of Bible books have been similarly confused with the fundamental question. Now, while it is doubtless true that some of the writings of Scripture might be brought down so late as to discredit their truthfulness, and even destroy their trustworthiness, as has been done by some Rationalists; yet questions of date are questions

of criticism, and they do not, as a rule, raise the foundation question, or really affect it,—especially as, in the case of authorship, there is the earlier and the later, and the final forms at different dates. So that although a late date were assigned to the final form, that would not necessarily involve the question of its truthfulness; since its substance, or the nucleus of it, might have been in the earlier forms. It is also true that theories of the method of composition might be, and in some cases have been, propounded that would be inconsistent with its truth and honesty. So that as a matter of fact it is not true, as Mr. Gladstone says, in his many ways valuable treatise, “The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture,” that criticism affects only the form but not the substance of Scripture. For some criticism, by its theories, principles, and supposed results, not only affects the substance, but cuts into the heart of it, and in effect pulverises and destroys it. Yet the methods of composition are the legitimate subjects of criticism; and, when conducted within proper limits and on sound principles, are not necessarily inconsistent with the strictest views of the infallible truth and Divine authority of Scripture.¹ Yea, many of the ablest and most believing critics have investigated such questions without destroying or disturbing these. And to connect such questions, or to seem to put them on a level, as if identical or like in kind, is only to make confusion worse confounded, and to play into the hands of the common foe.

6. CONFOUNDING TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION WITH THE VERITABLE WORD OF GOD.

Another fertile source of misconception and acrimony has been confusing traditional interpretations of Scripture with the veritable Word of God. It is remarkable how readily and unconsciously certain interpretations of Scripture have become associated and even identified with certain passages; and then the proverbial persistency and perversity of traditionalism perpetuates the confusion. This evil was prevalent, deeply seated, and of long standing among the religious teachers of our Lord’s time, and aroused widespread and persistent antagonism to His moral and spiritual teaching; and it evoked His keenest and

¹ See Dr. W. Robertson Smith, quoted above (p. 164).

most scathing exposures (Matt. 15³, Mark 7⁹). Scarcely less acrimonious and tenacious has been the fight in our day for traditional interpretations by many whom it would be an outrage to class with the scribes and Pharisees—hypocrites; for many of them are unquestionably the salt of the earth, possessing an intense, if somewhat narrow or defective, form of piety; because lacking the breadth and many-sidedness of the full Divine Word. For not a little of this antagonism and irritation, the insolence, recklessness, and even irreverence of the opponents of traditional views are largely to blame. For in advancing what in some cases and aspects might be truer and juster interpretations, they, in striking contrast to the Master, who taught as His disciples could bear it, have not been careful to avoid unnecessarily arousing the conscientious scruples, even if the pious prejudices, of earnest if insufficiently informed Christian men, but have rather gloried in shocking them.

And some rabid and reckless anti-traditionalists, as they haughtily style themselves, but who might be better designated revolutionary novelists, from the boasted novelty of their views, have, in their frenzy for novelty, almost gone the length of proclaiming that everything old is false, and everything called new, though often not new truth, but old, oft-exploded error, is true. They seem to deem it quite a sufficient refutation of any view to say it is old, and a valid proof of the truth of any new-fangled notion to say that it is new—"advanced"; forgetting that the wise man has said, "There is nothing new under the sun," and that opinions are like fashions, what is new to-day will be old to-morrow. Yea, from the very necessities and limitations of human thought, what is old now will soon be new again.

The truth is, that so far is it from being true that any interpretation reaching us through tradition is, on that account, to be regarded as presumptively untrue, the presumption is all the other way,—especially if the tradition is ancient, widespread, and has survived successive assaults. The tradition itself, and the persistency of it, are facts in favour of its truth, requiring to be adequately accounted for by its rejectors. And for these often crude and groundless novelties, these anti-dogmatists manifest frequently such contemptuous and contemptible dogmatism and intolerance as make the traditional dogmatist liberal and

open-minded in comparison, and show that the would-be anti-dogmatists are after all the most intolerant and intolerable dogmatists, — only on much more slender and untenable grounds.

Nevertheless, there have been many untrue traditional interpretations of Scripture to which men have clung, and for which they have contended with a tenacity and intensity that would have been justifiable and commendable only for the very Word of God ; and which are explicable only on the supposition that they regarded them as such, instead of what they really were, the untenable traditions and wrong interpretations of men. So that there is nothing more necessary and imperative for the upholders of the truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture than to sweep all such interpretations remorselessly away, to make patent and emphatic the essential distinction between God's Word and man's interpretations of it ; and to declare with a clearness and a force that none can mistake that it is of Scripture as originally given, and when properly interpreted, and *of that alone*, of which infallible truth and Divine authority are predicated or predicable.

This involves and demands the best Textual Criticism, thorough Exegesis, Biblical and Systematic Theology, and all the cognate knowledge and studies helpful to the ascertaining of the true meaning of Scripture. It requires also very specially realising the standpoint of the writers ; the purpose of the writings ; the peculiarities of the human authors ; the literary usages of the times ; the necessary limitations under which the books were written, either from the limited knowledge of the writers, or the imperfect state or limited capacity of those to whom they were immediately written ; the inevitable colouring of the writing from the mind and the age of the writer ; and all cognate or connected things.

But when, as the result of all these, we have ascertained the true meaning of the Word, the real mind of the Spirit in it, and what was really intended by God to be expressed through it, we have then got the truth, the whole truth, so far as God meant to give it, and nothing but the truth. And however hard it may sometimes be to part with traditional interpretations, especially where men have received spiritual good from them, because the interpretations contained a truth, though not the truth in the

passage ; yet every true lover of the Divine Word should for such a result be ready and rejoice to do it ; that the Word of God should not be endangered by identifying or confounding it with human interpretations ; and that our faith and hope might stand, not on the traditions of men, but on the Word of God.

NOTE.—Striking illustrations of the valuable results of believing criticism in removing critical difficulties in the Bible, as we have it, in our English Bibles, and even in the Hebrew, are given by Dr. Robertson Smith in his *The O.T. in the Jewish Church*, in Lectures IV. and V. These examples, which are largely increased in the second edition, remove many difficulties that have been stumbling-blocks to careful readers. They are not trivialities, but many of them large and important matters ;—relating to such things as the difficulties of the accounts of David's appearance at Saul's court, and not being known later, the place of meeting between David and Jonathan, the death of Ishbosheth, Ahithophel's counsel to Absalom, additional clauses to Jeremiah, the inscriptions to some of the Psalms, etc. By the aid of the better Text, in these cases, in the Greek translation (Septuagint) from older Hebrew MSS., many of these are removed, and explanation is given of how these interpolations, etc., crept into the original Hebrew MSS. This shows the value of true criticism, and the folly of disowning its true results, from adhering to traditional interpretations in the face of such. It also shows the unwisdom of objecting to urging that it is only for the Scriptures as originally given, when truly interpreted, that the Bible claims truthfulness and Divine authority ;—as if we could not know the character and claim substantially of what the original was, from what we have, by study, as in other ancient books,—or what anon or a temple was originally though now fallen or ruined.

CHAPTER III.

MISCONCEPTIONS FROM OVERLOOKING THE PROGRESSIVENESS AND ORGANIC UNITY OF REVELATION, TRUTHFULNESS, AND IM- PERFECTION CONSISTENT.

7. CONFUSION OF THE TRUTHFULNESS OF SCRIPTURE WITH SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY AND ABSOLUTE PERFECTION.

The remaining misconceptions and confusions to be noted here may be grouped under confounding the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture with scientific correctness and absolute perfection. How often have the errancy and untruthfulness of Scripture been supposed to be proved by showing that it did not give the exact numbers, or precise date, or perfectly correct details in every case,—when it never professed to do any such thing, but spoke roundly in popular language, as men are wont to speak and write to-day. How frequently have errors, and even contradictions, been imagined to be made out when differences appeared between various accounts ; or other forms of representation were given of substantially the same things ; or the whole facts were not mentioned ; or one passage seemed to conflict with another. As if omissions were errors ; differences, discrepancies ; defects, mistakes ; and variations, contradictions.

Why, the Bible nowhere undertakes to give full information on everything we might wish ; and its statements are often evidently fragmentary, and manifest a sublime indifference to the niceties that precisians would demand, when not serving its purpose. For by the very differences in its separate accounts it shows its independence and establishes its truthfulness ; and it seems purposely not to reconcile seeming conflicts that we may have something to do, and to leave difficulties to exercise our faith and train our moral character, as Butler has so powerfully reasoned.

THE BIBLE IS NOT A SCIENTIFIC, BUT A POPULAR BOOK.

How eagerly have scientific antagonists laboured in vain to demonstrate its contradictions to science, by trying to prove—say in the account of Creation—that in some small points it does not agree in its expressions with the alleged findings and views of some nineteenth century science, which often changes and contradicts itself; and while ignoring the great things and leading lines on which the Biblical and geological records agree, as shown by the greatest scientists, such science overlooks altogether the fact that the Bible never professes to give a scientific account of creation. It would have been utterly unintelligible for ages if it had. If it had been given in the terms of nineteenth century science, it would have been before the age for millenniums, and behind the age in the twentieth century, and so on *ad infinitum*. It ignores the fact that it was written, as is patent on the face of it, in popular language; because written for all mankind, and not for a small section called scientists. It was written from a particular standpoint, as things appear phenomenally in relation to earth and man; and so written as best to make the purposed impression upon us,—even the presence, and action of God in nature and Providence, in order to serve the great ends of the moral and spiritual education of the race.

But the amazing thing is, that while thus straining to make out contradictions, they have failed to note the great outstanding agreements and the striking harmonies in all the main outlines.¹ This fact is a striking contrast to other religious books, and is not found in any ancient book or cosmogony; for they all contain ridiculous things.² It is quite unique and inexplicable, except upon the supposition of Divine inspiration. How marvellous is the fact, when all other ancient books and cosmogonies show ludicrous absurdities, that a Book written thousands of years ago should give such an account of creation as men in all ages have been able to understand, appreciate, and receive much

¹ This has been shown at length in the great works of the greatest geologists and scientists from the dawn of geological science until now. See such works as Agassiz, Hugh Miller, Sir Roderick Murchison, Guyot, Dana, Sir W. Dawson, Virchow, and countless others.

² See examples in Gaussen, *On Inspiration*; Dr. Storr, *The Divine Origin of Christianity*.

light and good from ; and in which, in the fierce light of nineteenth century science, the uttermost prejudice and hostility have been baffled to make out a single demonstrable error, while true science is ever revealing increasing agreements in all the leading outlines, as the highest scientific authorities maintain.

The only scientific explanation of this is that it is a Divine revelation ; and that God's Spirit so guided the inspired writers, as, while not revealing science, yet not to contradict fact or be inconsistent with the truth when discovered. The effect of this fierce criticism has, however, only been to bring the leading men of science to prove that, not contradiction, but harmony, exists between them, when both records are correctly interpreted from their respective standpoints. And the lesson to be learned, both by scientists and by scholars, as well as by believers in Revelation generally, is that nothing should be judged before the time ; that alleged errors and contradictions in Scripture often arise from misinterpretations of it ; and that much of the imagined erroneousness is the fruit of the strange misconception that the truthfulness or trustworthiness of Scripture means or implies scientific preciseness, when such an idea is precluded by the whole character and purpose of the Bible.

Who does not know that a thing may be perfectly true, and entirely reliable, though not stated in scientific language or with pedantic precision ? The peasant's testimony to a fact may be wholly truthful and trustworthy, though incomplete or unprecise in itself, and couched in rustic language. And it is only by an entire misconception of what is meant by truthfulness and trustworthiness that they have been identified with or held to imply scientific or precisian exactness.

MISCONCEPTION FROM CONFUSING TRUTHFULNESS WITH PERFECTION.

Similar misconceptions have arisen from confusing these with absolute perfection in various forms. Some have imagined that the Bible was erroneous because the languages in which it was written were not the purest or most perfect, because its literary style was by no means perfect, and because the grammar and composition fell short of the best. But surely these are paltry puerilities and most jejune ideas. Grammar, style, language,

—what are these? Not matters of truth, or fact, or principle at all; but of usage, taste, habit, at best of more or less imperfection; for the best are but imperfect media, and means of expressing thought, especially the thoughts of God.

And although it may be and has been maintained that the Hebrew and Greek were peculiarly fitted to be the vehicles of Divine Revelation at its different stages; and although it is not difficult to see the Providence of God, yea, a very obvious Divine design, in the selection of the Greek language to express the last and highest revelation of God,—since it was the most nearly perfect, and, when the best and last revelation was given, the prevalent language of literature throughout the civilised world; yet this was not at all essential, or even of much moment, to the truth, reliability, or authority of the Word of God. In fact, this does not affect these at all. Why, the rustic or the barbarian, who had no language but his native Doric, and broke every rule of grammar, and violated every principle of style, might nevertheless be more truthful and trustworthy in his statements than the most cultured modern Athenian. And certainly the most pronounced opponents of these cardinal things, while, on the one hand, adducing such irrelevant trifles against the Bible claim, on the other hand press the importance, and even the necessity of the Bible languages to the Divine Revelation to an extreme and ridiculous extent. Professor Ladd,¹ for example, goes even the absurd length of urging that only the Hellenistic Greek could have truly conveyed the N.T. Revelation. Surely this is the acme of extravagance!

In the light of the unique translatability of Scripture into every language of mankind, which has reasonably been urged as an evidence of its Divine origin and its universal design, it is a very jejune imagination that would thus drive to absurdity the interesting and suggestive phenomena of Biblical language. It may be reasonably shown that the languages of Scripture were the best suited for the purposes of Revelation. But it is in any case only a very crude misconception of things essentially different in kind which could create the imagination that any argument against the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture could be made from any imperfection of style, grammar, or language.

¹ *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture.*

CONFUSING IMPERFECTION WITH ERRONEOUSNESS.

Another more prevalent and misleading, but not less strange misconception has been confusing the imperfect with the erroneous, —as if relative imperfection and actual error were identical, when they are really radically different. It is amazing with what cool assurance many writers have imagined that if they can point out any imperfection in any part of Scripture, they have thereby demolished its inerrancy and demonstrated its erroneousness, as if all unconscious of the baselessness of the assumption. Not only rash, audacious writers, in their loose and exaggerated utterances, but sober, better informed though inconsistent authors, like Professor Ladd in his immense compilations on the question,¹ and even others more thorough and able, have quietly assumed this, as if it had never occurred to them that there was, or could be, any distinction between relative imperfection and absolute error in the teaching of Scripture. They have, indeed, proceeded on it as unquestionable, that if they could discover anything rudimentary or imperfect in any part of Scripture, they thereby disproved its infallibility and proved its erroneousness. Hence they have hastened to expose by exaggerating the “crude moralities” of the O.T., as if rudimentariness were equivalent to error, whereas a thing may be rough and rudimentary, yet entirely true so far as it goes.

THE PROGRESSIVENESS OF REVELATION DOES NOT IMPLY
ERRONEOUSNESS, BUT POSTULATES TRUENESS AND
RELIABILITY.

They have also insisted *ad nauseam* on the trite fact of the progressiveness of Revelation: as if that rendered self-evident the unreliability and erroneousness of the earlier portions of Scripture. And they have even eagerly asseverated that our Lord Himself, who so magnified the O.T. and emphasised with such majesty its truth and inviolability, had actually abrogated, and even condemned not a little of its distinctive teaching. But they seem never to have thought it necessary to reconcile their ideas of Christ's teaching about the O.T. with His own most explicit and majestic declarations of its truthfulness and inviol-

¹ *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture.*

ability, or with His own habitual use of all parts of it, as equally and unquestionably the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority.

Nor have they reconciled their views with His profound far-reaching summation of its whole teaching as embodied in the two great commandments—Love to God and love to man. “On these *two commandments* hang *all* the law and the prophets.” Consequently, according to His infallible interpretation of it, there was nothing in the O.T. that was not contained in substance in the Divine law of love. Therefore, there could not be anything in it that was inconsistent with love ; and, therefore, nothing that He could denounce as wrong, or abrogate as erroneous. Love like God is eternal. Thus the Word of God,—the expression of Him in every part and fibre of it, is like God Himself—love.

CHRIST’S TEACHING IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT DOES NOT
CORRECT, BUT ENDORSE AND DEVELOP THE TEACHING OF
THE O.T.

Those utterances of our Lord,—mainly those in the Sermon on the Mount opening with “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time,” on which they have sought to found their unwarrantable assertions—are directed, not against the teaching of Scripture, which would have been a Divine contradiction of Himself. For it was *God* who in times past spoke unto the fathers by the prophets” ; and it was the same God who “in these last times hath spoken unto us by His Son.” It was the Son who Himself declared, as if to answer by anticipation this very objection, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” ; and added with such solemn and majestic emphasis what might have for ever silenced all such asseverations and insinuations, “Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5^{17, 18}, Luke 16¹⁷). With this He pre-faced all His utterances about the teaching of the ancients. So that He could not have directed them against the Scriptures, which were His own Word, but against those misapprehensions, perversions, and misapplications of it with which an un-

spiritual religiosity and soulless literalism had associated and overcrusted it.¹

So far as they did bear upon the inspired law, it was only to develop, deepen, perfect, and add to it; and to reveal the Divine breadths and depths of heart-searching spirituality and soul-stirring truth lying unperceived or unappreciated therein.

VITAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMPERFECTION AND ERROR.

They all served to disclose the radical distinction between what was merely imperfect and what was untrue, between what was only undeveloped and what was erroneous; and to expose the strange obtuseness that could confuse such obviously different things, or the crude misconception that could in any-way associate and confound imperfection with error. Error is what is contrary to the truth. Imperfection is what is true so far as it goes, but not the full-orbed truth. Error is stating as true what is false. Imperfection is stating what is true, nothing but the truth, only it is not the whole or the perfect truth. Imperfection is truth in germ, outline, or immaturity. So that imperfection and error are as distinct as truth and falsehood. And yet many of the opponents of the Bible claim use them as if they were equivalent, or interchangeable, or at least terms so nearly related, and so much of the same kind that the one is used carelessly for the other. No wonder that so misusing words and so confusing things that differ they should come to strange conclusions. Has it come to this that these would-be advanced thinkers have, in this late age, to be taught the difference between a defect and an error, between imperfection and untruth, between what is not the whole truth and what is the opposite of the truth? Surely truth in germ or rudimentary form is as truly truth as truth in a mature and perfected form: since perfection in the full development requires trueness in the earlier elementary stages and germ forms. Error can never develop into truth. Perfection can be evolved only from true germs, erroneousness and wrongness in rude primitive stages can never develop into truth and righteousness. The laws of evolution preclude falseness and immorality

¹ See Dr. David Brown and Dr. Meyer's Commentaries and Appendix.

in earlier stages of what emerges into perfection and holiness, and require trueness and rightness in the origins and progressive stages. No Christian writer, certainly no upholder of the Bible claim, ever doubted progress from elementary and imperfect revelations and stages of moral ideals or culture, to fulness, maturity, and perfection, or ever questioned that the N.T. was an advance upon the O.T. Nor is it conceivable how any believer in the Bible as a Divine Revelation could, with it in his hand, believe anything else. And what is all the tall talk about the progressiveness of Revelation, of which some loose thinkers of our time make so much, as if it were a marvellous discovery or revelation of their own at the close of the nineteenth century? Why, it is as old as the hills,—older than Christianity, old as Revelation itself. It is the veriest commonplace in theology from the beginning; as well taught and illustrated in old-fashioned Matthew Henry as in any other. Without question the Revelation and teaching of the N.T. is fuller, higher, and more advanced than the O.T., as some parts both of the O.T. and the N.T. are than others. So that there is a relative imperfection and a comparative inferiority in some parts of Scripture when placed alongside of others.

So also some parts of Scripture, O.T. and N.T., are more valuable and practically useful than others. These are by no means specially in the N.T.; yea, they are perhaps quite as abundant in the O.T. as in the New. In this, in many respects, the O.T. will bear favourable comparison with the N.T. It would not be easy, if it is possible, to find any book in the N.T. at once more thrilling and evangelical than Isaiah. Is there any book of Scripture so infinitely diversified and so practically helpful to pious devotion and spiritual experience as the Psalms? And the Book of Job stands peerlessly alone in all literature, sacred and profane, in grappling, with such profundity, pathos, and power, with the great mystery of suffering; so that it well deserves Carlyle's appraisal—"The greatest work in literature."

These things are mentioned here because it is another of those strange hallucinations on which the opponents of the truth, reliability, and Divine authority of Scripture base their error, that the holding of these means maintaining the equality in value and perfection of all parts of Scripture. But what

possible support can these things give their contention for the fallibility and erroneousness of Scripture? Absolutely none.

THOUGH ALL SCRIPTURE IS NOT OF EQUAL VALUE, ALL
IS TRUE IN SENSE INTENDED.

Though all parts of Scripture are not equally valuable, does that prove that they are not all equally true, or that any of them are untrue, when God says, "*All* Scripture is God breathed, and *is* profitable"? For, surely, if it is all profitable because all inspired, it must be all true; unless it can be shown that error instead of truth is profitable for such high moral and spiritual ends! As reasonably say that some parts of the earth and the heavens, which were all created by God, "by the breath of His mouth," were not God's work; because, forsooth, they are not all equally valuable. Yet of a desert as of a paradise it is true—

"Nothing useless is or low,
Each thing in its place is best,
And what seems but idle show
Strengthens and supports the rest."

PROGRESS IN REVELATION PRECLUDES ERRONEOUSNESS, AND
REQUIRES RELIABILITY IN EARLIER STAGES.

Though Revelation has been progressive, does that prove that in the earlier stages it was erroneous, or give a shadow of support to the imagination that any part of it contained error? A strange progress verily, that is founded on error, rooted in untruth, and developed from falsehood! If some portions of Scripture are less perfect, less developed than others, how can that even appear to imply that they are untrustworthy or untruthful? except upon the absurd assumption that imperfection and error are equivalent, or necessarily connected, when they have really no connection whatever. Because some parts of Scripture are higher or more advanced than others, does that demonstrate or afford a particle of evidence that the lower or less advanced parts are therefore unreliable or erroneous? As rationally assert that, because the propositions in the 6th or 11th book of Euclid are higher and more advanced than those in the

1st or 2nd, *therefore* the propositions in the 1st and 2nd are not true or trustworthy! Every mathematician from the days of Euclid until now would gaze at such a novel demonstration, and wonder where such a reasoner got his brains, and think his peculiar mental construction a prodigy deserving investigation!

Why, so far is it from being true that imperfection, inferiority, progress, and advancedness in Scripture prove or imply error or unreliability, on the contrary they prove the very opposite, and imply and require truthfulness and trustworthiness. Our last illustration best demonstrates this. For the higher and more advanced propositions of the later books of Euclid are based upon and must postulate the truth and reliability of the propositions in the earlier. Nor is it possible to advance a single step, or ever reach the higher and more complex, except upon the assured basis of the truth and reliability of the lower and the more elementary. Every step in the progress has to be built upon the proved or implied truth and demonstrated reliability of the earlier steps.

So progress in Revelation necessarily implies and requires the truth and trustworthiness of the earlier Revelation. Every advance in the unfolding of Divine truth has to postulate and build upon the trueness and reliability of what has been previously revealed. And the only possible way to reach the higher and fuller developments of Revelation is to assume and proceed upon the trustworthiness of the lower and less developed records of it. The superstructure can never be steadfast unless the foundation is sure. The lower and later streams cannot be unpolluted and life-giving unless the higher head-waters are kept pure and living. The branches can never be strong or fruitful if the trunk is hollow or the root rotten. And the principle of a progressive Revelation can be received as true and depended on as trustworthy only upon the basis of the trueness and trustworthiness of the earlier and more elementary revelations. So that the progressiveness of Revelation is the most fatal fact of all to the theory of the errorists or contradictionists, as Mr. Gladstone would call them, who pretend to make most of it, and yet violate, destroy, or deny the necessary presuppositions of trueness and trustworthiness on which it is founded, and without which progress in Revelation is a misnomer and an impossibility.

Further, all those passages in which Christ so speaks of the O.T. as to imply a relative imperfection, also imply, predicate, and postulate the trueness and reliability of the O.T. Scriptures so far as they go. For they are treated as the germs, roots, and bases of the new and fuller revelations which He gives. But germs must be sound and not unsound, if they are to become true developments or valuable specimens. Roots must be healthy, not rotten and partially poisonous, if they are to grow into fertile trees and bear the best fruits. And bases must be rock not sand, trustworthy not unstable; iron, not mixtures partly iron and partly clay; rock, not partially rock and partially sand, if they are to be the foundations of reliable structures. Mixtures of iron and clay, rock and sand, are worse and less reliable than foundations wholly sand or clay. And mixtures of truth and error are of all things least satisfactory as foundations of faith and conduct,—especially when it is impossible to separate with certainty the truth from the error. They are utterly useless as the germs of higher developments of truth, or starting-points of new and fuller revelations.

From the very nature of things they render progress based on them an impossibility, and advances made on things so incoherent and antagonistic in their elements a manifest absurdity. So that progressiveness in Revelation is necessarily precluded by their very supposition,—that the records of the earlier and germinal revelations were erroneous and unreliable, or inseparable mixtures of truth and error. All possible progress in Revelation presupposes the trueness and trustworthiness of the primitive and progressive, though relatively imperfect revelations, from which and through which progress proceeded to the highest developments and the most perfect revelations.

CHRIST'S FULFILLING OF THE LAW IMPLIED TRUSTWORTHINESS IN THE PREFIGURATIONS, EVEN IN MINUTIE.

Hence the very figures and expressions used by Christ in this connection imply and presuppose this, "I came," He says, "not to destroy, but to fulfil" the law and the prophets. And whether the word "fulfil" be taken to *fill in*, as filling in an outline to its full completion; or to *fill out*, like the waxing moon—waxing from its first graceful curve on the face of the evening sky to the

last stage of curvature that perfects the full-orbed moon; or to *fill up*, like a tree from the soft and facile sapling, shaking in the mountain breeze, to the full-grown cedar, defying the blasts of ages with its majestic boughs, and covering the mountains with its shade; or like the imperfect child or the immature youth, growing up into the fully developed and perfectly matured man,—in *every* case it presupposes and requires trueness and reliability in what are the germ, basis, and earlier stages, which through development become at length the perfected and the ideal. As the poet, with true poetic intuition as well as scientific truth and insight, says, “The child’s the father of the man.”

And although the parts are only in embryo or immaturity, and therefore relatively imperfect, they are all sound and perfect up to the stage of their growth. The sapling is the cedar in its initial stage, and is as true and real up to the measure of its growth as the full-grown monarch of the mountains. The moon’s first graceful horn is in measure as true and reliable a representation of the moon as any subsequent phase onwards to full moon. The outline of a picture or a landscape is in degree as genuine and true as any after-completed or full-vised view. Nor is it possible to fill in, or fill out, or fill up anything of the kind unless by presupposing the germinal and imperfectly developed forms to be true and reliable. In every case there is imperfection and immaturity; but there is also the promise, and the potency, and the primitive forth-puttings of maturity and perfection.

And if “to fulfil” is taken in the ordinary sense, as Christ is usually supposed to have fulfilled the O.T., by realising in Himself as Antitype what was prefigured in its types, predicted in its prophecies, and foreshadowed in its ideal representations; then, again, the same entire and even precise trueness and reliability are implied and necessitated. For it would have been impossible for Christ to have fulfilled them in that exactness of detail, precision, and literality with which the N.T. inspired writers, after His example, so frequently, and so remarkably prove and emphasise He did, unless the things that He *thus* fulfilled had been entirely true, yea, minutely accurate and thoroughly reliable, even in small details. While in other things this preciseness was not necessary nor designed, yet in these the minutiae were of the essence of the fulfilment, the whole point

and proof lying in the exactness and even literality of the correspondence of the predictions and prefigurations with the fulfilling facts.

Here we see a reason why our Lord insisted with such absoluteness and majesty upon the truth and inviolability and necessity of fulfilment of every jot and tittle of the law and the prophets. All this sets forth, in the most explicit and emphatic manner possible, Christ's view of the trueness and trustworthiness of the Word of God. If our Lord had wished to declare in the most absolute and ineluctable manner the inviolable truth and unquestionable trustworthiness of all Scripture, it seems impossible to conceive how human language could more explicitly express, or practical action more indubitably endorse these than in the language He has employed, and the manner of using the O.T. He habitually followed. Thus the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture are not only not inconsistent with the great pregnant fact of the progressiveness of Revelation, but it implies and requires them, and is based upon and rooted in them, yea, is impossible without them. They also accord with it. On the other hand, the progressiveness of Revelation and the necessary immaturity, or relative imperfection of earlier revelations, preclude and are inconsistent with erroneousness and unreliability in the record or expression of progressive revelation. So that the fact which the errorists thought disproved the truth and reliability of the Word of God when properly understood and reasoned, actually supports these and excludes their opposite theory.

THE BIBLE IS A LIVING UNITY AND SPIRITUAL ORGANISM THAT IMPLIES TRUENESS AND RELIABILITY IN THE COMPLEMENTARY PARTS.

In the same line it must be said that the Bible has, both by the defenders and opponents of its truth and inviolability, been too much treated as if it were a number of separate books, or isolated fragments with little or no connection, instead of what it is, a unique whole and living unity. It is a unique, connected, and articulated moral and spiritual organism, breathing with the Spirit, pulsing with the life, shining with the light and glowing with the love of God. The unity of Scripture has

often been urged as a powerful argument for its Divine origin and inspiration. But it has not been used as it ought in support of the truth and reliability of Scripture. And it has rarely, if at all adequately, been realised as a Divine living organism, whose very nature requires the trueness and reliability of the different complementary parts.

OPPOSITE EXTREMES—FRAGMENTING SCRIPTURE.

Some unwise upholders of its infallibility have so fragmented it, and then regarded and spoken of its separate fragments as if equally valuable, and in themselves in their isolation as absolutely true and universally applicable, without any consideration of their connection with other parts, and of their place and function in the living, organic, God-breathed whole. They have thus taken up an extreme and untenable position, and made wrong, unwarrantable, and improper use of isolated texts; and thus played into the hands of the opponents of its truth and Divine authority. The texts have often been treated as if they were each by itself an independent and abstract embodiment of truth universally applicable in all circumstances and connections; they have thus been frequently misconstrued and misapplied, according to the opinions, prejudices, or idiosyncrasies of the individual. Consequently the veriest puerilities, the most jejune imaginations, and even the greatest absurdities have sometimes been advanced with oracular assurance as the Word of God and the teaching of the Spirit. Any questioning of their truth, or doubt as to their Divine authority, has been solemnly denounced as unbelief or rejection of the Word of God. Those so thinking and acting doubtless very earnestly mean to declare and maintain the infallibility and Divine authority of God's Word, and without doubt consider themselves the most thorough upholders and faithful defenders thereof. But they commit a serious mistake. They are really, though unconsciously, in some aspects the worst foes of the true doctrine of the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture. They burden its defence, and create many obstacles to its reception and unnecessary prejudice to its prevalence. They have mistaken extremeness for strength of position, and thereby have played most effectually into the hands of its avowed opponents.

Under the appearance, and doubtless with the intention of honouring the Word of God, what they really do is to honour their own unwarrantable opinions and unscriptural theories ; and thus injure and discredit the Word of God by their traditions. What they actually do in tearing particular texts away from their connections, breaking them into so many separate and independent fragments, and using them according to their own fads and fancies, is to misinterpret and pervert Scripture, and to designate their own wrong interpretations the Word of God.¹ In fact, it is another kind of Rationalism, which, on the principle that extremes meet, joins hands with avowed Rationalism in undermining and discrediting the truth and Divine authority of the real Word of God. Let it therefore be clearly understood that, in maintaining the trueness and reliability of Scripture, we do not maintain that each passage in itself, and set apart from its connections with the other related parts, is absolutely true, entirely independent, and universally applicable. But that each part and passage as originally given, when truly interpreted in the light of all the rest, and properly applied according to God's intention, is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority—the Word of the Lord.

SEPARATING BOOKS AND PARTS—IGNORING ORGANIC UNITY.

On the other hand, many assailants of its truth and authority also so separate its books and parts, as if they had no organic unity or vital oneness. They have so spoken of it, and treated it as if they knew not or wished not to recognise that the Bible is not a conglomerate, a mass of many disconnected books, but one unique, Divine, God-breathed product, composed of many diversified but complementary parts ; yet nevertheless a sublime, homogeneous whole—the written Word of God. Hence they speak of it as not a book but a library ; and in that one word manifest their misconception of its real character, and reveal how little they have entered into the heart or scope of the Divine Word, or grasped the essential spirit of organic revelation. They also treat the different books as such by themselves,

¹ Examples of this vicious and perverting habit may be seen in many Plymouth Brethren writings, as also in some narrow, ill-informed Churchmen's writings, and those of other faddy societies and viewy persons.

as though there were no others of the same kind, or on a kindred subject, in existence; and draw their conclusion from each isolated fragment, irrespective of what might be learned on the same subject from the other cognate books that might contribute to the better interpretation of each.

No wonder that their conclusions have been often fragmentary, meagre, and unsatisfactory enough. For they violate all the principles of rational and scientific study of any subject, making inferences from the narrowest inductions, shutting out the light derivable from cognate and complementary sources, and disowning altogether the invaluable aid, in the proper interpretation of any particular part of a subject, derivable from the general principles and established conclusions ascertained from other parts of the same. As well might an amateur geologist construct a science of geology from examining the different strata independently, ignoring their connection with each other, the general facts common to all, and the established results of previous investigations from a comprehensive survey of the whole. But he should not wonder if scientific geologists gave little weight to his disconnected conclusions, or smiled at his geology. The last thing he should expect from them would be that his fragmentary explorations should be regarded as science. Yet some of those who have thus most flagrantly violated every principle of rational interpretation, and most openly travestied every canon of scientific induction, have, with amusing innocence and pretension, dignified their travesty with the name of the Inductive Method.

Some have carried out this unscientific and misleading method of isolation and disintegration so far as to limit any measure of truth, reliability, and Divine authority which they might allow to Scripture to those individual passages and details of which these things are especially predicated. But this is to treat the Bible as the books of no other religion can be studied with any hope of true interpretation. It is to close the mind to the general tone and pervading trend of Scripture, which imply its claims of infallible truth and Divine authority. It is to disregard the explicit and ineluctable passages that predicate these things of *all* the Scriptures, and which assume their unity and Divine origin. It is to set at naught the testimony of each to all, and of all to each of the unique collection of sacred books. It is to violate

all the sound principles of Biblical criticism, and of the fair or reasonable criticism of any literature ; so that we might well ask, as a distinguished professor of Hebrew literature asks in another connection of the methods of some of the higher critics of the O.T., "Was ever a literature so treated?"¹ It is based upon the absurd assumption that in every case in which this claim of Scripture is not explicitly made in detail the opposite is implied ; and that, too, in the face of the many direct and indirect ways and passages in which this is unequivocally claimed for all. And it proceeds upon the false conception and perverting idea that the Bible books are to be treated as if they were entirely independent,—a library of separate human productions instead of a unique Divine-human Revelation ; and as if the deep and vital unity of Holy Scripture, of which every student worthy of the name has been deeply conscious, were a fable or a delusion, instead of being, as it is, a patent and indisputable fact, a pregnant and most significant reality.

THE BIBLE AS A LIVING SPIRITUAL ORGANISM REQUIRES
SOUNDNESS AND SYMPATHY IN ALL ITS RELATED PARTS.

Both of these opposing extremes—the avowed Rationalism and the virtual Rationalism—ignore or fail to recognise that the Bible is a living spiritual organism ; not only a unity, but a living unity ; not only a homogeneous religious whole, but a living, organic, God-breathed whole, shining with the light, pulsing with the life, and throbbing with the love of God. It reveals one consistent, harmonious, though richly diversified, complementary system of moral and spiritual truth. It was germinal, ruder, and more elementary at first ; fuller and more developed, but still imperfect, as it grew from age to age, as historian wrote, prophet spoke, and psalmist sang ; till at length in the fulness of time the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, as the full and perfect revelation of God, which found its most perfect, final literary expression in the inspired writings of the N.T. But all through the revelation was of the same nature, and really the same in substance. Its various parts though very diversified, are essentially consistent and harmonious, truly complementary and interdependent ; possessing certain unmistakable marks and charac-

¹ Dr. A. B. Davidson.

teristics that distinguish them from all other writings, as a unique, harmonious, God-given whole—all breathing one Divine spirit, evolving one heaven-born life, and giving one homogeneous and glorious revelation of Divine grace.

This suggestive but insufficiently realised fact—that the Bible is not only a unity, but a living, spiritual organism, for the expression of the thought, life, and love of God—is simply fatal to the theory of indefinite erroneousness, and requires, as the condition of fulfilling its Divine function, that its various related parts be true and reliable. For how could there be a real unity of Scripture, if some parts of it are true and others false, some passages reliable and others untrustworthy;—especially when these incoherent, antagonistic elements are, on the theory, indefinite and indeterminable; and when it is impossible from the very nature of things to separate infallibly the true from the false, or to determine with certainty which things are true and trustworthy, and which are not. Whatever such incohesive conglomerations of truth and error as this theory of indefinite erroneousness implies may be, they certainly cannot form a real unity; for unity demands, as an essential requisite, homogeneity in materials, cohesiveness of substance, and reliability throughout the various related and interdependent parts. Still less can they form a living spiritual organism for the true and trustworthy expression of the mind, heart, and life of God—a pure and reliable medium embodying the life-giving revelation of grace.

For obviously a living organism that is to express and embody living and life-giving truth must itself be living and sound in all its related and mutually dependent parts, and must be throughout a true and trustworthy expression and embodiment of it. Untruthness and unreliability in the parts would of necessity render a living, organic whole impossible; while an indefinite and inseparable mixture of truth and error makes it a misnomer, and any such idea an absurdity and an evident contradiction in terms. And yet that the Bible is a living spiritual whole is a fact beyond dispute, recognised from the earliest ages—a fact that the progress of Revelation only evidenced and emphasised more and more from age to age as the corresponding parts of the spiritual organism developed and approached completion.

Therefore the Errorists must either deny the undeniable facts

that the Bible is a living, organic, spiritual whole, and a progressive revelation ; or else admit that its various related and interdependent parts are true and trustworthy. In the one alternative they deny unquestionable facts. In the other they abandon their own theory. And in either case they must support our contention for the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and the Divine origin and authority of Holy Scripture.

DIVINE TRUTH CAN DWELL PERFECTLY ONLY IN THE DIVINE MIND. HUMAN THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE IMPERFECT.

The shortest and completest answer, however, to all the objections to the truth and Divine authority of Scripture, from its alleged defects and imperfections in some parts, is that Divine truth cannot dwell perfectly except in the Divine mind ; and that Revelation coming to us, as it does, from the infinite and all-perfect Fountain of Truth, through the limited and more or less defective medium of human agency and expression, must of necessity partake of the limitations and imperfections of human thought and language,—limitations and imperfections that will vary in each case according to the state and characteristics of each mind, age, and experience through which the revelation comes. This prime fact, which lies in the very nature of things, has been ignored or overlooked by the two extreme and both narrow-visioned parties to this controversy.

THIS IGNORED AND VIOLATED BY OPPOSITE EXTREME VIEWS.

The hyper-perfectionists overlook it when they talk of Holy Scripture as being in every part and particle of it, in itself, absolutely free from imperfection, as perfect as God. They forget that at best man's mind can receive only partial conceptions, and human language give only imperfect expression of Divine truth. They see not that though both in conception and expression it is God-breathed, and therefore true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority ; yet of this as of other things that come to us through human channels, it is true, as the poet sings—

“They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

It is not in the Written but in the Incarnate Word alone that we

get the perfect revelation of God ; and in Him only can we say with absolute truth that we have "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person."

It is equally and less excusably forgotten or ignored by the hyper-imperfectionists, who vaunt so much of breadth and depth of view, but evince in this a notable narrowness and shallowness of thought and view. For while exaggerating the defects and imperfections of Scripture, the very idea of attempting to fasten erroneousness and unreliability on Scripture from defects or imperfections is not only a strange confusion between imperfection and error, but is based upon the shallow delusion and baseless assumption that any revelation coming through imperfect men could be absolutely perfect. Therefore, if there cannot be a true and trustworthy revelation of Divine truth unless there is freedom from any defect or imperfection, and if Scripture cannot possess infallibility and Divine authority without absolute perfection, then Scripture is not only indefinitely erroneous, it is entirely so ; for it is all imperfect. It is not then merely a mixture of truth and error, it is all error together ; for there is none of it absolutely perfect ; and on this superficial assumption that to be true and reliable it must be perfect, revelation is an absolute impossibility, which is an absolute absurdity.

Therefore, when we affirm the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture, we do not declare its absolute perfection, as many have so strangely misconceived. On the contrary, we maintain that it was of necessity partially limited and relatively imperfect, from the necessary limitations and imperfections of human thought, language, and experience. Nay more, since God adapted His revelations to the state, the attainments, and needs of the agents and the age to which and through which they were immediately given ; and since in giving them the inspiring Spirit did not violate or crush, but conserve and utilise the free operation of the mental faculties of the recipients and communicators of Revelation,—the Scriptures expressing and embodying them were necessarily limited by the knowledge, attainments, characteristics, and experience, with all attendant defects and imperfections of the persons through whom and the people to whom they were first given.

They are not free from, but expressed in, the thought, language, literary style, methods, and other peculiarities and

idiosyncrasies of the inspired writers, and the times in which they were written; and, in short, take their colour from, and reflect the mind of, the human author, and the age in which he wrote. But this does not destroy, lessen, or affect the truthfulness, trustworthiness, or Divine authority of any part or passage of Scripture. For it is an essential part of the true doctrine of Inspiration, that in inspiring the human authors to write the Scriptures the Holy Spirit so acted on their minds as, on the one hand, to preserve them from error in expressing His mind, and, on the other hand, left them entirely free in the exercise of their mental faculties, according to their respective characteristics and peculiarities, acquirements and experience. Yea, He so utilised and selected these as to make them the means and channels for the better, fuller, and more diversified expression of the Divine fulness of His truth and grace. The Infinite Spirit of God so acted on the finite spirit of man as to preserve from erroneousness in expressing His Word, and therefore it was truly supernatural; yet so thoroughly natural that the writers wrote or spoke as freely as though there had been on them no action of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently we must, in order to ascertain that Word of God of which we predicate infallible truth and Divine authority, be careful to make a thorough use of all the means, textual criticism, exegesis, systematic and Biblical theology, Biblical criticism, comparative religion, and all other means and methods by which we may throw ourselves into the views, circumstances, light, and literary methods of the Bible writers. Thus we may realise their standpoint, grasp their purpose, ascertain their meaning, and catch their spirit, which opens up a vast field of research; and only when we have done so can we be said to have fully reached the Word of the Lord. For sometimes the apparent may not be the real meaning. Here as elsewhere "things are not as they seem." But when we have done so, and ascertained what the Scriptures veritably meant—what God designed to express in them—that is, the Scripture as originally given by the Spirit of God, properly interpreted through the same Spirit,—then we have got the truth, the whole truth God intended thereby to give, and nothing but the truth.

This clearing of the way is not only a removal of some leading misconceptions that have confused the issue, but an

exposure of many sophistical fallacies that have prejudiced the truth, and a real refutation of not a few of the most plausible objections by which the proper evidence from Scripture has been prevented from receiving due weight or even consideration. It has also enabled us to give part of the positive proof and preliminary arguments for the Bible claim.

NOTE.—Confirming the position stated above, Dr. Robert Candlish says : “I suppose that truth absolutely pure and perfect can dwell only in the Divine mind. To lodge it in the mind of a creature, exactly as it is in the mind of the Creator, may very probably be an impossibility. The truth as it is in Jesus, even when communicated directly and immediately, was not to the inspired Apostles absolutely and perfectly what it was to God.”—*Reason and Revelation*, p. 69.

NOTE.—As to the Bible being both Divine and human in its authorship, Principal Cunningham well says : “In one sense, the Scripture is wholly the word of God ; in another, though just as truly and really, it is wholly the word of man. . . . As the Spirit had resolved to employ the agency of man, and of men in the exercise of their natural powers and faculties, He, of course, must be supposed to have in some measure adapted or accommodated Himself and His operations to these powers or faculties. We are not entitled to say that this adaptation may not have gone on so far, without affecting the reality of His thorough and pervading agency, as to have left room for whatever diversity in their narratives was consistent with their veracity and accuracy, as estimated by the principles by which these things are ordinarily judged among men.”—*Lectures*, pp. 352, 383, 384. See also Carson’s *Theories of Inspiration Reviewed*.

CHAPTER IV.

MISREPRESENTATIONS AND CARICATURES.

WE must now look at and expose some of the misrepresentations and caricatures by which the opponents of the truthfulness and Divine authority of the Word of God have prejudiced the truth, and prevented a fair consideration of the Scripture proof by which it is established. They have found it a much easier thing first to misrepresent and then to caricature the position of the real defenders of the claim of Scripture than honestly to face their proof, and seriously to attempt to answer the arguments by which they have demonstrated that the Bible claims to be the Word of God, of infallible truth, thorough trustworthiness, and Divine authority. Hence they have eagerly rushed off into endless side issues instead of coming to and grappling with the real issue. They have expended immense ingenuity in misrepresenting, and almost exhausted language in abusing, the imagined views of the defenders of the true position, instead of facing their real position and attempting to refute their unanswerable arguments. And this has been done with such manifest unfairness and with such perverse persistency, in face of reiterated protest, by some boastful pretenders to intellectual honesty, that it requires much patience to bear it with equanimity, and great charity not to regard it as intellectual pusillanimity or wilful misrepresentation. Nor, indeed, is it possible for anyone that has studied the subject, and is at all well versed in the literature of the question, to regard it otherwise, except upon the supposition of culpable ignorance or intellectual density. But wilfully or unconsciously, from ignorance or obtuseness, misrepresentations of the most culpable and discreditable kind have been persisted in. This method of misstatement and abuse must be exposed, if it were only to make men

abandon such tactics, and to prevent others being perverted by such travesties.

I. THAT THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN BY DICTATION.

One of the oldest and still most common of these, already referred to, is, that the upholders of the Bible claim and maintain that the Scriptures were given by dictation; as if they had been taken down by an amanuensis from the lips of the inspiring Spirit, or printed in Paradise and, like the Sibylline books, let down from heaven—all perfect, complete, bound in calf, with vowel-points inserted! But surely this kind of burlesque might, at this time of day, have been allowed to rest in its grave till another resurrection; and surely the assailants of the claim of Scripture must be ill off for arguments when they so eagerly persist in resurrecting this long vanished spectre. Some unwise believers in the infallibility of Scripture may have used unguarded expressions open to such construction,—though it would be difficult to find those who would own this as a fair representation of all they have said. But surely it is only a weak cause that could use such against intelligent defenders, who repudiate all this as a contemptible caricature. Why, the merest novice has only to open the pages of Scripture to see the almost infinite diversity of style, subject, and method of treatment, to realise how utterly alien to the patent facts is every theory of *mere* dictation. Everything is perfectly natural, unstereotyped, and as different from dictation as could well be conceived; and it is manifest that, whatever the Spirit of inspiration does, He does not interfere with the individuality and the perfect naturalness of the human author, but leaves each as free to follow his own style, method, and bent as though there were no inspiration at all.

ALLEGATION THAT SLAVISH LITERALISM IS HELD BY THE UPHOLDERS OF THE BIBLE CLAIM.

Akin to this is the misrepresentation that the upholders of the Bible claim adopt a slavish literalism: and rash writers like Dr. Horton, more apt at inept epithet than cogent argument, upbraid them as maintainers of a “Cast-iron theory,”

though what he precisely means by a phrase so nonsensical in such a connection, it would doubtless be more amusing than instructive to learn. Others, from whom better things might have been expected, parade the differences between O.T. quotations in the N.T. and the Hebrew or the Septuagint, and imagine they have thus made out a strong case against the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture,—the defaulter in this being not, however, the O.T. but the New. Strange hallucination this! As if the same truth could not be expressed in somewhat different words; as if God could not alter or add to, modify or use a part of, give fresh application to or light on, His own earlier Word to illustrate or enforce a new and fuller revelation! Why, even human authors are wont so to use their own and others' writings to suit the purposes of their later writings. And is God, the Holy Ghost, the Divine and real Author of Scripture, to be precluded from doing so, through inspired agents, for His gracious purposes, by the puerile fancies of puny and presumptuous men?

No intelligent defender of the truth of Scripture has ever advocated such a slavish literalism. There is a literalism which is not slavish but reverent, not forced but scientific:—even that which leads to scrupulous carefulness to ascertain, by correct exegesis, the precise meaning of the words of God,—especially in crucial cases in which vital truths and the salvation of men are concerned. It is the literalism of correct interpretation of the mind of God speaking in His Word; and for this literalism we can plead abundantly the example and authority of our Lord and His apostles, and the best Biblical scholarship of all ages. Yea, all students of Scripture profess to seek its real meaning, and by a kind of natural necessity act on the assumption of its importance and reliability except when it crosses their own theories. And even then they seek to justify their non-acceptance of its real meaning by denying its authenticity or evaporating its teaching, and by postulating the truth and reliability of some other part. In fact, every real student of Scripture does and must so act, and assume more or less, in order to really study at all. Nor will any feeble cynicism of self-sufficient lights, who seek licence to follow their own fancies or walk in the light of their own eyes, move us for a moment or a hair's-breath from following such example, or owning such

authority. But that is not the kind of literalism in question, and disowned here. And however much such criticism may affect any eccentric individual favouring such a slavish literalism, it has absolutely no bearing whatever upon or weight against the position of intelligent defenders of the Bible claim. It is nothing else than reckless and culpable misrepresentation, and a discreditable caricature of that position.

2. THAT THE HUMAN ELEMENT IN SCRIPTURE IS DENIED.

ALL HUMAN AND ALL DIVINE: OF GOD THROUGH MEN
INSPIRED.

Another more general and, at first sight, more plausible misrepresentation of the true position is that those maintaining the Bible claim of infallibility and Divine authority deny the human element in Scripture as it is phrased; that they so magnify the Divine as to ignore the human, and that we ought to find out where the Divine ends and the human begins, and then we might be able to distinguish between the infallible and the erroneous. What wondrous wisdom there! A Daniel come to judgment! As soon find out where in man the soul ends and the body begins. As soon might Shylock find his pound of flesh without the blood, as separate the human from the Divine in Holy Scripture. As soon discover where the human ends and the Divine begins in the Incarnate Word as in the Written Word of God. It is all human and all Divine. It is all God-breathed, and yet all man-conceived and man-written. Every part, particle, and passage of it is perfectly human, and yet truly Divine. As perfectly human as if Divine agency were not in it at all, and as truly Divine as though human agency had nothing to do with it.

That, at least, is our doctrine; and that, it can be shown, is the doctrine of Scripture. So far is it, therefore, from being true, that we make less of the human in Scripture than our opponents, it is as near as may be the opposite of the truth. To us it is all human; to them it is only partially so. With them the human ends where the Divine begins; with us it has no end and no beginning except where Scripture itself begins and ends. As they make less of the human, they make less, too, of the Divine. To us, as to Christ and to Paul, it is all Divine

(Matt. 5^{17, 18}, John 10²⁴, 2 Tim. 3¹⁶). To them it is only partially Divine, because with them the Divine ends where the human begins. To us both the Divine and the human have neither beginning nor end, they are both coextensive with Scripture. So that we make more of both the human and of the Divine.

Some, to escape from accepting or facing this simple yet profound scriptural teaching, have said the substance is Divine but the form human; and, therefore, while the substance may be true and trustworthy, the form is erroneous and unreliable. But this is a superficial and nonsensical view. For how can we know the substance except through the form? The substance is *in* the form. The form is the expression and embodiment of the substance. We know nothing of the substance save through the form. To us form and substance are one, as inseparable as body and soul; and our whole knowledge of the one is precisely what we learn through the other; and all that we get through the form makes our idea of the substance. Therefore, by how much soever the form or expression is erroneous, by that much precisely our knowledge of the substance is so also. And the only possible way to be kept from erroneous ideas of the substance is to have the form true and reliable. Trueness in the expression is, therefore, a necessity of trueness in our conception of what was meant to be expressed.

Besides, as has been often urged, it is the *Written Word* that the Bible declares to be God-breathed. Divine Inspiration is specially predicated of the Scriptures,—not so much of the truth as conceived in the mind of the writer, but as expressed in the writing,—not, as Dr. Chalmers puts it, of the process of manufacture, but of the product manufactured. Therefore the expression is as really Divine as the substance, the form as truly God-breathed as the matter. The revelation of the substance, so far as it was revealed, was given by Divine inspiration. The selection, arrangement, and distribution of the material were also through supernatural inspiration. And the Bible explicitly states that the expression of the truth, whether spoken or written, was God-breathed; and this is specially and pre-eminently said of the Word as *written*—the Scriptures.

So that, according to the Bible teaching and claim, all the parts and operations entering into the composition of the Bible

are Divine. But they are also all human. The selection, distribution, and expression of the materials of the Scriptures are all of man as well as of God. Inspired men, thinking, speaking, and writing as freely and naturally, according to their gifts, tendencies, acquirements, and experience, as though there had been no Divine inspiration at all. So that, although Scripture is all Divine, it is also all human. The form is as Divine as the substance—the letter is in its way as perfect as the spirit. So that we seem to have here the image of the Incarnate Word, in whom the Divine and the human are found in the most perfect union. And the work of the Divine Spirit is, as in the case of the Incarnate Word, so to combine the Divine with the human as that both are fully, perfectly, and inseparably joined in one unique and wondrous whole.¹ It is therefore a misrepresentation or a misconception—a misrepresentation from a misconception—that the defenders of the Bible claim, deny, or lessen the human in the Scriptures. On the contrary, they affirm and magnify both.

3. THAT ALL IN SCRIPTURE IS APPROVED BY GOD, THOUGH OFTEN EXPRESSLY CONDEMNED.

A third and, if possible, still more glaring misrepresentation and caricature of the Bible claim is, that all which is recorded in Scripture is approved by God. Long passages are adduced about the sins of leading historical characters, such as the drunkenness of Noah, the incest of Lot, the lying of Abraham, the deceitfulness of Jacob, the murder and adultery

¹ As Bishop Westcott so truly and suggestively says of God's inspiration of Scripture, "It combines harmoniously the two terms in that relation of the finite to the infinite which is involved in the very idea of Revelation. It preserves absolute truthfulness with perfect humanity, so that the nature of man is not neutralised . . . by the divine agency, and the truth of God is not impaired but exactly expressed in one of its several aspects by the individual mind, each element performs its perfect work; and in religion as well as in philosophy a glorious reality is based upon a true antithesis. The Letter becomes as perfect as the Spirit; and it may well seem that the image of the Incarnation is reflected in the Christian Scriptures, which, as I believe, exhibit the human and divine in the highest form and in the most perfect union." *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 16. So, similarly, Origen long ago. The words of a telegram *are* the message. They embody and constitute it.

of David, the dissoluteness of Solomon, and all the evil-doings in the times of the Judges, the kings of Israel and Judah, down to the close of the O.T. ; as also not a few kinds of things in the N.T. "There," it is said with something akin to scorn and ironical triumph,—“there are your famous saints !—there is your trustworthy, infallible, and Divinely-inspired and authoritative Bible !” Of all such perverse raving and reviling one scarcely knows what to think or say. It is such a crude medley of gross darkness, foolish raillery, and nonsensical caricature, that one feels it a humiliation to refer to it or expose it now. Had it been left to the coarse, glib tongues of infidels, palming off on ignorant hearers in obscure halls such claptrap in lack of real arguments, we should not have condescended to notice it. But when this wornout abuse and caricature, which has been exposed and repudiated *ad nauseam*,—and which never had any foundation save in the benighted imagination of those who could conceive it,—is taken up and reiterated in books and speeches by men supposed to be religious teachers, claiming to be fresh theologians, and posing as advanced thinkers—yea, men of light and leading in such matters, it makes one pause in amazement, and wonder if it be possible to penetrate such obtuseness or perversity ; and makes one almost despair of ever fixing in such minds the most elementary ideas of this question.

And to assert or imply that any intelligent defender of the truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture was fool enough to hold that because these things are recorded in Scripture they are, *therefore*, approved or sanctioned by God, is not only a caricature and a misrepresentation, but an insult to the intelligence and an outrage on the moral sense, which would require for their inception a density or obliquity akin to that which could imagine it. There may have been some utterances made on particular points by over-eager advocates of traditional interpretations which might give some colour to such a conception. An unwarrantable mental attitude may, through wrong traditional ideas, have been given to some minds leading to untenable defences of some things in Scripture which were never meant to be approved or defended. And in the progress of Biblical study the Church will doubtless find it necessary to modify or abandon some views long held as to some things recorded in Scripture which she felt herself called

on to defend, but which were really indefensible, and were never meant to be defended. When properly understood they will be found not to have been put there as being in themselves sanctioned by God, but nevertheless recorded there by God's approval and inspiration to serve some other good end of Revelation. But that some of those things recorded, which are manifestly wrong, and sometimes outrageous, are to be regarded as being sanctioned, or approved, or connived at by God, is a monstrous idea, which no man morally sane ever seriously believed. Why, even the words and actions of the Devil are recorded in the Bible, and recorded, too, by Divine Inspiration.

But it is notorious, as every Christian child knows, that things are recorded, not for approval, but for condemnation; as the whole tone, environment, and often the express teaching of the passages show. And where they are not explicitly condemned, it is because it is assumed that this is unnecessary—that the very record of them is itself their condemnation.¹ It would only weaken its severity to condemn them in express terms—just as in narrating some moral outrage it would shock and amaze men to expressly say, “This is wrong.” Does Shakespeare thus in express terms condemn the vice or recommend the virtue of his characters? Nay; he chooses usually a more excellent way. And cannot God, or an inspired writer, do the same without being open to the suspicion that it is not condemned, but even approved? Why, you do not often need to teach a child so in a good story-book—the story itself is to the child the condemnation or commendation. God assumes that we have consciences and common sense, and that we shall not abandon them when we come to read and interpret His Word, as we are supposed not to do with any other book.

No doubt, however, some men are so full of their own teaching powers that they could improve upon God's way; as some have imagined, like the ancient king, that the Almighty would have done well to have taken advice before He created the world; and, among others, John Stuart Mill thought he could have made a better one! If there are some cases in which it is

¹ Dr. Horton in the *Christian World* asks, as to some things in Judges, why they are not more severely condemned. The answer is, that God assumes men have conscience and common sense!

not easy to ascertain whether it is approved or condemned,—and it may be neither, but recorded for other ends,—we must, as with other books, be patient and painstaking, and interpret each particular passage in the light of the context and the whole teaching of Scripture. Doing so in dependence on the Spirit's help, we shall not be often left in doubt where God intended us to know.

Yea, there may in some cases be an apparent where there is no real approval, if properly interpreted. Sometimes, indeed, the speaker or actor in the passage may seem to praise a deed or course ; but it by no means necessarily follows from this that God approves. And when even the writer may in rare cases appear to favour, commend, or sympathise with the thing, you must ever interpret carefully, and accept of nothing as sanctioned by God until you have made sure that God intended to sanction it when He secured its insertion by inspiration. Everything in the Bible is there by Divine sanction, yea, by Divine inspiration ; but that by no means implies His approval in themselves of all the things recorded there. For the truth that everything in the Bible is there by Divine sanction differs *toto cælo* from the error that everything there is in itself Divinely sanctioned.

THE VERY RECORD OF WRONG THINGS IS THEIR CONDEMNATION
—EVEN OF GOOD MEN'S SINS.

So far is it from being true that everything inserted in Scripture by Divine direction receives from that Divine sanction ; it is very often the reverse, and becomes one of the best evidences of the truth and reliability of the Word of God. The very record of them is the most emphatic condemnation of them. And the severe, the unvarnished truthfulness with which the sins and backslidings of good and great men are recorded in the sacred page, without any palliation or excuse ; and the fearful judgments that are seen to pursue the transgressors, even when good and honoured men, are proofs decisive of the scrupulous truth and holiness that characterise its narratives, and reveals that a supreme and unique regard for truth and righteousness inspired its production. What other history or biography portrays the sins, failings, and infirmities of its saints and heroes in such faithfulness, and exposes them in such a fierce light of

burning holiness? In this the Bible stands out peerlessly alone, a unique and lonely splendour among the literatures of the world. Thereby it shows that truth and holiness were its supreme purpose and formative principle. It establishes its claim to truthfulness and trustworthiness, evidences its Divine inspiration and authority, and excludes every theory of indefinite erroneousness.

Further, the raisers of this objection have overlooked the profound and far-reaching fact that the sins and aberrations of men, and even devils, are recorded by Divine inspiration in all their deformity and hideousness, in order to expose the vile nature and terrible evil of sin, and the sinfulness of the human heart—a most important revelation. It is thus an essential and all-important part of revelation—a revelation of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of man, which forms the dark and lurid background of the glorious revelation of grace. So that in this again, as in many other cases, the objections brought by misconception and misrepresentation against the trueness and reliability of Scripture from such things being recorded there, are not only rebuked, but have actually called forth in their refutation new and weighty corroborations of the Bible claim.

4. THAT THE INSPIRED WRITERS ARE HELD TO BE INFALLIBLE AND PERFECT IN THEIR PERSONAL CONDUCT AND CHARACTER.

Another misrepresentation and delusion is, that the upholders of the Bible claim hold, or should hold, that the inspired writers were infallible in all their actions and utterances, if they were infallible in their teaching and writings. And on this assumption ridicule has been heaped on the defenders of the true position by parading and misrepresenting the inconsistency of Peter at Antioch, for which Paul had to withstand him to the face; the difference between Paul and Barnabas, in which a good deal might be said for both; the alleged contradiction between Paul and James on Justification; and the questionable, if not mistaken, character of some of Paul's own utterances. Then, again, there are the strange actions of some of the prophets,—one, a lying prophet, however, causing the death of another, and another cursing the wicked children for their mockery of God's message and messenger;—though these are not beyond

explanation on other grounds,—even Archdeacon Farrar lending his peculiar oratory to the caricature of such things.

In regard to these utterances, suffice it here to say that none of them really touch, or in the least invalidate, the Bible claim. James never contradicts Paul when the interpretations are correct and the different standpoints realised, as has been shown for centuries. Paul never contradicts himself, or sound reason, when properly understood ; and when he leaves us free to differ from him in some of his utterances, he declares he is not then speaking with Divine authority in the name of the Lord,—it is in those things in which he expressly intimates that he is giving only his own opinion, and not the commandments of the Lord. If, therefore, any of these expressly excepted utterances were found not to be the wisest, or applicable now, this would not at all affect the truthfulness or authority of all the other utterances, in which no such exception is made, for which Divine authority is, by the very mention of these exceptions, implicitly claimed.

As to their actions, their differences, and their inconsistencies in conduct, it is simply not true that the defenders of the Bible claim maintain that inspiration secured immunity from mistakes in conduct, or errors in private judgment,—nay, not even in every case of individual, ecclesiastical action,—witness the backsliding of Peter at Antioch, or the baptism of Simon the Sorcerer. It only secured truthfulness in writing by Divine inspiration, or speaking the Word of God in their official capacity—*ex cathedra*. Divine inspiration was a special gift for a particular purpose, namely, the communication of God's Word for all time ; and beyond this it is not held to have secured infallibility, or to carry Divine authority.

5. THAT THE INSPIRED WRITERS MUST HAVE HAD KNOWLEDGE IN ADVANCE OF THEIR TIMES ON *ALL* SUBJECTS IN ORDER TO BE AUTHORITATIVE IN THEIR WRITINGS.

A similar superficial but misleading statement of the position has been, that it implies and assumes that the inspired writers must have had knowledge in advance of their times, in all other things to which they directly or indirectly refer, besides those forming the message of Revelation ; else, as alleged, their writings could not be all true and entirely trustworthy. As a matter

of fact, however, this is precisely the opposite of what the defenders of the Bible claim have taught. As a question of reasoning it is a mere assertion, begging the whole question—a *petitio principii*—, and is based upon the bold and baseless assumption that the Spirit of God could not keep the inspired writers from error in such references without giving them supernatural knowledge upon everything to which He might lead them to make even the most distant reference. It is a presumptuous limitation of the Holy One of Israel, a daring dictation to the Holy Ghost; as if the Spirit of Almighty God were to be confined to the narrow grooves of the shallow and unspiritual metaphysic of a small-souled, though pretentious, Rationalism.

True, some discoveries of science have been suggested by Scripture references, and discoverers have sought and found wonderful confirmations there. And in the progress of science and discovery new meanings and depths have been found in passages that were never supposed to contain them, till the light of science disclosed the far-reaching fulness and unknown riches of Revelation. The two lights harmonising and coalescing were found to be, not two opposing or contrasting, but harmonious and complementary lights, proceeding from one eternal light, of which God, Who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all, is the Divine source and essence. And thus it may and should be said with perfect truth that the inspiring Spirit so guided the inspired writers that, while their writings did not anticipate these discoveries,—which was no part of their purpose,—they so wrote as, when properly interpreted in the light of their standpoint and purpose, not to contradict the established results of future discovery, but to harmonise with them in a most marvellous manner.

Many illustrations of this might be given; but it will suffice here to refer to the wonderful corroborations of the accurate historical truth and trustworthiness of Scripture that recent archæological research in Assyriology and Egyptology have brought to light; and to the no less amazing correspondence between Genesis and the geological accounts of creation; and to the striking and suggestive passages in Job, Psalms, etc., that confirm and suggested Astronomical and Geological discoveries.¹ Every year, almost every other day, yea, as Professor Sayce

¹ Countless books on Scripture and Science give illustrations of these. See Appendix.

puts it, every other turn of the spade, is digging up some fresh confirmation of the exact truthfulness of the Bible record, both in its agreement and even in its contrasts with the Babylonian and other records. Nor is it an insignificant, but a suggestive fact, that the same spade of research which is thus digging up fresh evidence of the trueness and reliability of Scripture, is at the same time, and by the same means,—by the unanswerable logic of hard, undeniable facts,—digging holes in and disproving many of the false but fine-spun philological fancies that German Rationalism has been trying to palm off as facts upon docile English followers, but which have taken little real hold upon our practical Anglo-Saxon intellect, which gives more for a single hard fact than for a thousand flimsy specious theories of ever-changing speculators, who have little to do, but must propound something new or *outrè*, however untrue, to attract attention, gain reputation, and secure students!

Nor is the force of this affected by any differences in certain small points between the Mosaic and the geological record of creation, which some anti-scriptural scientists like Professor Huxley have striven to make out and to magnify, with a bitterness and a bias that speak of anything save scientific calmness or intellectual fairness; but which savour of a bad cause, and exemplify well a philosopher in a fury when being beaten in a controversy, one half of which he does not understand. For, besides the fact that these apparent discrepancies have been repeatedly disposed of, and never would have appeared had the assailants only taken pains to ascertain the character and purpose of the writings, or the aim and standpoint of the writer, it is notorious that other scientific experts, and these by far the larger number and higher authorities in that particular department of science, have accepted, and successfully upheld the truthfulness and even accuracy of the Bible record.

WHILE NOT REVEALING SCIENCE, THE BIBLE HARMONISES WITH IT, IN STRIKING CONTRAST WITH ALL OTHER WRITINGS.

Nay more, they have demonstrated in various ways and from different standpoints, not only the reconcilableness, but the real harmony and thorough agreement in all the leading outlines and important points between Scripture and science, though, of

course, each presents them in its own distinctive way. And I have been amazed that, when discussing the apparent differences or seeming discrepancies in a few trivial things, the fact was overlooked that they harmonised and agreed in the great outstanding things ; the points about which there could be any discussion being as nothing compared with them—a few molehills beside mountain ranges. It is these wonderful agreements that the opponents of the Bible claim to truthfulness have to explain. Nor is it possible rationally to explain them except upon the supposition that the Divine Spirit, who knew the truth, guided the human writers so to write as to secure this. Let any unbiassed student only look at the sober, reasonable, and at the same time sublime representations of creation and its relation to the Creator given in Genesis and other parts of the Bible ;—representations so simple and yet so sublime ; so self-consistent and yet so truthful ; so satisfying to the highest religious intuitions,—presenting the Creator in His true relation to creation as a God immanent in, and yet transcendent over, all nature and history ; and at the same time in such deep accord with the profoundest philosophy of our day as to be justly regarded as largely its producer, and in such substantial, yea, unique agreement with the findings of science up to date, that the highest authorities prove its thorough harmony therewith.

Let him then look at the absurd, grotesque, and ludicrously erroneous cosmogonies of all the ancients, whether contemporary with or subsequent to the Bible writers ;—so ridiculous and exaggerated that we read them now only for amusement or pathetic reflection upon their darkness and error,—and he will thus receive such an impression of the amazing contrast as nothing else can give, and will have brought home to him with irresistible force the conviction that the truth and infinite superiority of Scripture are inexplicable except upon the supposition of supernatural guidance and inspiration given to the Bible writers.¹ For it should never be forgotten that the writers of these ancient, uninspired cosmogonies were in many cases men of genius and high intelligence, fully versed in all the knowledge of their age, the leaders of thought in their day ; and some of them, specially the Greeks and Romans, in measure leaders of thought still

¹ See Gaussen, *On Inspiration* ; Dr. Storr, *The Divine Origin of Christianity* ; and Appendix.

in ethics and philosophy ;—men of greater intellect and learning than the writers of Scripture generally, and mostly much better informed in all the knowledge of their times, with the possible exception of Paul. Yet, while the one class has produced cosmogonies that only provoke the laughter of mankind now, the others have so written as to have evoked the wonder of every age. Although writing, some of them, thousands of years ago, they have so written that the science of the nineteenth century, speaking by its highest authorities, declares it to be in fullest harmony with its latest results. Here, then, is an unquestionable effect, and on the first principles of sound reason and the inductive philosophy, it requires and demands an adequate cause.

So strongly has the force of this been felt, even by the opponents of the Bible claim, that futile attempts have been made at explanation, in order to avoid frankly accepting the conclusion to which it plainly and inevitably points, viz. that the Bible writers received such supernatural aid in all they wrote for God—in *all* Scripture—that they wrote only what was true, or at least not necessarily inconsistent with the truth.

EVASIONS OF THE PROOF OF THE SUPERNATURAL INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

Very amusing have been some of the evasions ; one of the latest by Professor Ladd, himself one of the ablest and best-informed advocates of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, will serve as an illustration.¹ He is capable of imagining, and apparently believing, as he certainly maintains, that the natural effect and tendency of revealed truth upon any materials used in the composition of Scripture was to eliminate error from them ; as if the revelation of moral and spiritual truth to the mind of the writers could of itself, by a mere natural process, correct errors of measurement, fact, history, reasoning, cosmogony ; or prevent the geological, astronomical, or other mistakes or misconceptions of the time entering appreciably into the expression of revelation. This is surely a most incredible hypothesis ! requiring, verily, far greater credulity than the extremest suppositions of the opposite views. I have not found such faith, or need of faith, no, not in the absurdest literalism. How infinitely more rational and

¹ *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture.*

credible is the Scripture view, that the Spirit of God by inspiration enabled them to write a truthful and trustworthy Bible!

But if there is any truth in this most credulous but incredible theory, why not carry it out consistently, and assert that the influence of revealed moral and spiritual truth was such as to preserve from error and secure truthfulness throughout. If so, then that would come practically to the same result as ours, only from a different and less credible cause. If it was able to prevent error and secure truth in some things, why not in all? On what reasonable principle can it be maintained that revealed truth kept away error in such things as Ladd refers to—things as different from moral and spiritual truth as well could be—, and yet stopped short in other things not farther removed? The whole theory is, indeed, a miserable makeshift, without a particle of Scripture support, demanding a marvellous credulity, and involving difficulties compared with which the difficulties of the true view are as nothing. And that those who reject the Bible claim, because of its incomparably smaller difficulties, should nevertheless be capable of accepting or conceiving this instead, is like straining at a gnat to swallow a camel.

But, after all, what would it come to? Simply to this, that freedom from error or truthfulness would be secured through the indirect instead of through the direct influence of Divine inspiration. For the advocates of this theory simply hold that the moral and spiritual truths, which are supposed by mere natural effect to secure truth and eliminate error from Scripture, are given by Divine inspiration. Therefore, whatever freedom from error or truthfulness effect is attributed to the truths revealed is after all the effect of Divine inspiration, and only in the first remove. In our view it is the *direct* effect of the Holy Spirit's operation which secures the truthfulness and trustworthiness. In theirs it is the indirect effect. But in both cases it is the result, more or less direct, of inspiration; and this conclusion they then must come to at last.

Such, then, is the futility of all such desperate expedients to evade the force of these otherwise inexplicable facts that corroborate substantially the Bible claim. How much better then, instead of such evasive and incredible theories, which accord neither with the Word of God nor the reason of man, to accept the Scripture declaration in its plain and ineluctable

integrity, that "all or every Scripture," or as our Lord puts it, every "jot and tittle" of the Divine Word, is given by inspiration of God—*God-breathed*: and that the Divine Spirit, who inspired it all, as thus expressly stated, *by* that and *in* that very inspiration of it secured its truth, inviolability, and Divine authority!

Notwithstanding this, it should never be overlooked that this is an entirely different thing from saying that, besides matters of revelation, the inspired writers received knowledge in advance of their times in matters of science, philosophy, or other things to which they allude,—that, in short, they revealed science or philosophy. It is not the fact. They never professed to do so. No recognised defender of the Bible claim has maintained this. It is not at all implied in the true statement of the question. And, after all, what is said about it can only be regarded as a misrepresentation resorted to by those who wish to prejudice the true position, because they cannot answer the solid mass of Scripture and other evidence by which it is established.

6. THAT IT IS MERELY A THEORY OF INSPIRATION. IT IS FACT, AND A REVELATION.

After this it is scarcely necessary to expose the prejudicial and persistently-repeated misstatement that the upholders of the Bible claim are merely contending for *a priori* theories of inspiration instead of the facts, truths, and teaching of Scripture itself. These our opponents pretend pre-eminently to deal honestly with, and to disregard theories. Theories! Facts! Truths! Why, it would be nearer the truth to say that they have little else but theories,—theories almost *ad infinitum*, and sufficiently ridiculous, as we have seen; and no two of them exactly the same. We repudiate any mere theory. We profess only to express in concise form what is explicitly taught throughout the Word of God, and in its strongest, sharpest forms, in its very words, especially of our Lord Himself. What we hold and undertake to prove is expressly stated and necessarily implied in the very words, facts, and phenomena of Scripture; and is taught most emphatically and inevitably of all in the very words and usage of Christ Himself. If the idea of theories is to come in at all, we claim to show that the difference between us is simply the difference between bad theories and good.

Facts! why it is just on these, the *whole* of these, we take our stand, and include in them the whole express teaching and actual phenomena of Scripture. Our greatest complaint against them is that they refuse to recognise the facts, the whole facts, and ignore altogether the main facts, which are the express teachings of Scripture on the question. They look only at a few of the phenomena of Scripture, to the exclusion of the great majority and most important of them; and misrepresenting or misunderstanding and misapplying these, come therefore to conclusions in direct contradiction to the main mass of the phenomena, and to the whole of the explicit teachings of God's Word when treating professedly of the question. And as for the truths of Scripture, it is just these we seek to defend against them, and are therefore so concerned to maintain this root-truth—the truthfulness and trustworthiness of God's Word, which that Word itself lays at the basis of all its other truths, and makes the ground of all its revelations for men's acceptance and salvation.

CHAPTER V.

ERRONEOUSNESS ALLEGED IN GREAT AND ESSENTIAL THINGS.

7. THAT IT IS ONLY OF SMALL THINGS OF WHICH ERRONEOUSNESS IS PREDICATED. THE REVERSE OF THE TRUTH.

THE last, and probably practically the most serious, misstatement that we shall here notice is that the matters to which the deniers of the truth of Scripture attribute erroneousness are small, trifling, and unimportant. They call them spots on the sun, grains of sand in the golden ore, microscopic details, things of no moment, merely matters of form, or words which leave the substance intact, and which do not at all affect any practical religious interest! Now there may be some who restrict the margin of errancy and error to such things, and there are, doubtless, others who assert that they do not theoretically go beyond this. Had we only such to deal with the controversy might be short, as it certainly would be much less serious. Yet even then those who positively assert the erroneousness and untrustworthiness of Scripture in such things, without specifically stating the limit, or how it may be definitely fixed with certitude, finality, and authority, have to face and to meet the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of reconciling their doctrine with all those numerous explicit passages, expressions, and facts—the many indubitable facts—, and the trend and tone of Scripture, which seem plainly, if language, usage, and tone can teach anything, to teach that “all” Scripture is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority.

When they have once seriously faced these difficulties, and attempted to give as satisfactory explanations of them as they insist on being given of their own puny, and in many cases despicable trifles, they will then be better able to appreciate the real state of the question, and to realise what we have so often

tried to penetrate and impress them with, that the difficulties connected with maintaining the plenary truth and trustworthiness of Scripture are as nothing compared with the difficulties of their own position when positively stated and erroneousness is alleged without specific limitation. The one view has only at most to offer a possible explanation of trifling, apparent discrepancies; nor is even this logically requisite, for there are difficulties of some kind connected with every truth known to man. The true view is supported by the whole weight of the mighty mass of positive evidence;—from the most explicit and emphatic teaching of Scripture; the pervasive claim made therein; the salient outstanding facts and features thereof, as well as countless details and significant minutiae; the uniform tone of authority, the invariable air of truth, and the palpable trend of reliability that everywhere pervade, characterise, and permeate it.

The other view has to answer and satisfactorily explain all this seemingly insuperable mass of objections to the doctrine of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, while it is absolutely destitute of one particle of *positive* Scripture proof in its support, and has never attempted to produce one single text or item of such proof, but has based its whole theory and contention upon difficulties of the true view. These arise from apparent discrepancies, which might be very naturally anticipated in such writings in the vicissitudes of many ages, which are not generally difficult to explain, in no case preclude a possible explanation, and are therefore of no validity against such a formidable array of positive Scripture evidence.

The difficulties of the one are as grains of sand, of the other as mountain ranges in comparison. And the amazing thing to the upholders of the Bible claim is that the opponents—yea, even the most cautious of them—never once seem to realise that there are any difficulties connected with their opposing theories, or that they have anything whatever to do with answering these; and this, too, though their whole opposition to the right view is based on, and wholly composed of difficulties supposed to be connected with it. Their own theory bristles with countless formidable and insuperable difficulties, which, in fact, make it all difficulties together. Yet they in their marvellous simplicity seem to imagine that if they appear to make out one apparent

difficulty or discrepancy in Scripture, they, by that one magic stroke, both refute the Bible doctrine and establish their own opposite theories ! Was there ever such straining at gnats while swallowing camels ? Therefore those who maintain the truth and trustworthiness of Scripture in a general way, but deny these of Scripture as a whole, have all this to face and answer. They have also to tell us precisely what they mean thereby, and show specifically what parts and items of Scripture are true and trustworthy, and what false and unreliable, as well as how we can be infallibly certain about these.

ERRONEOUSNESS NOW ASSERTED OF IMPORTANT AND
ESSENTIAL THINGS:

But though that is so, yet there could not be a greater mistake or delusion than to imagine that this is the real state of the question now. It is not now a question about trifles at all, but about substantial and fundamental matters, which not only enter into the substance of the Christian faith, but pertain to its essence, and underlie the whole revelation of the Bible. Were it merely a question about unimportant details, many of the ablest and best informed men, who are deeply impressed with the conviction that we have reached a crisis in the history of Christianity, at the end of the nineteenth century, in connection with God's Word, would not think what Principal Rainy called such "despicable trivialities" worthy of much or serious discussion. For although, as will be more evident later on, the vicious principle, which tends to undermine and destroy the truth and authority of Scripture, might be shown to be contained in the meekest and least pronounced form of the doctrine of indefinite erroneousness ; yet were the applications and exemplifications of it limited strictly to petty apparent discrepancies many would leave the controversy severely alone, to exercise the mouse-eyed ingenuity of half-idle microscopic critics who revel in such trivialities.

But we are far past that stage now. Ten or twelve years ago that might in some quarters have been said to be the character of the questions. Writing on these subjects then, I reasoned that the question would not, could not, and should not rest there ; but must, on the principles implied, logically and irresistibly go on, till we should be deprived of an authoritative

and reliable Bible altogether ; and left stranded on the rocks of bald Rationalism, without any real and reliable standard or source of truth, with nothing left us except the errant reason of erring men. But I little imagined that a single decade would all too amply fulfil and exemplify the truth of this. In many cases they have gone far beyond anything I had dared to forecast. It is not now small inaccuracies, trivial inconsistencies, or unimportant discrepancies that the Bible is charged with. Giving here only a summary outline of what is prevalent in much current teaching, and abounds in rationalistic and naturalistic literature, it is not merely inaccuracy of dates, or numbers, or such like easily explicable things.

ERRORS ALLEGED IN EVERY KIND OF THING. THE O.T.

But it is errors of words and expression, when these embody great truths ; errors of fact, when the facts are made the hinges of great arguments, and the bases of all important revelations ; errors of chronology, when vital doctrines hang on its truth ; errors of reasoning are freely charged, and that, too, when the reasonings are revelations, proofs, and confirmations of the foundations of faith.¹ Innumerable false statements on all manner of subjects are alleged—contradictions of science, philosophy, sociology, and ethics, and self-contradictions. Bad, and in some cases monstrous morality, is said to be not only recorded but sanctioned and taught. What are called outrages, cruelties, and revolting crimes are declared to be not only permitted and connived at, but “commended and even commanded” by God.

The Bible is charged with containing much crude, erroneous, and delusive teaching on matters of a religious character ; and even not a little of its distinctively religious teaching, given as the Word of the Lord, is said to be false, misleading, and wrong—yea, even “superstitious and degrading.”² Great parts of what it gives as notable history and fact are pronounced to be “mere fiction,”³ and fables, myth, and legend, “romance and idealisation.”⁴ Many of the most outstanding and revered early

¹ See Appendix, and Books V. and VI. ; and Lichtenberger's *History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century*.

² Baur.

³ Reuss.

⁴ Professor Bennett, *Faith and Criticism*.

characters of the O.T., often referred to as such in the N.T. by Christ and His apostles, are said to be purely "imaginary" personages who never really existed, "eponymous" heroes,¹ such as the patriarchs before and after the Flood and some of the Judges. The accounts of the Creation, the origin of man, the Fall, the Flood, the call of Abraham, the history of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, the Exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea, the giving of the Law, the appearances of Jehovah at Horeb and Sinai to Moses and Israel, the wanderings in the wilderness, with the pillar of cloud and fire, the crossing of Jordan, the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, the histories of Joshua, the Judges, and much later, with all the miracles, are now by many critics said to be largely "legendary," and "romance,"² and full of errors; by others to have the merest threads of historic truth, amid the mass of mythical and fictitious story; and by others still to be "bare fiction"³ in important parts, and "not a word of truth" in them.⁴ The whole writings of the Pentateuch and Joshua (the Hexateuch) are by some of the ablest and most famous Rationalistic critics—the teachers of the others—held to be, and treated as, untrustworthy and misleading writings, forged many centuries after by designing priests for personal aggrandisement, and imposed by fraud upon a credulous and superstitious people as the Word of God.⁵

So that a large, and that the fundamental portion of the Word of God is between all these various assailants pronounced to be not only not true in little things, but erroneous in an indefinite number of things, and untrustworthy, yea, fictitious and actually misleading, and even morally wrong in many of its salient features, leading representations, and most important statements and narratives,—ay, in large, fundamental parts of its distinctive ethical and religious teaching.

As with the legal and historical books, so also with the prophetic and other writings, they are not only charged with innumerable errors, misconceptions, and misrepresentations, but

¹ See Dr. Parker's exposure in *None Like it*; Professor Adeney in *Christian World*; Dr. Horton, *Inspiration and the Bible*.

² In the *Christian World* one calls the Book of Joshua a romance; and another in the same copy denounces the conquest as immoral; while a third holds up the battle of Omdurman and conquest of the Soudan to admiration!

³ Reuss.

⁴ Wellhausen.

⁵ See among others Wellhausen's *History of Israel*.

also the prophets themselves are charged with false prognostications, ambitious ideals, and even immoral motives. Some of the most important prophecies, on the truthfulness of which great issues hang, have been declared to be "prophecies after the event." Some, too, of the finest prophecies of the latter-day glory (e.g. Isa. chap. ii.), which are referred to in the N.T. by Christ and His apostles, and form a precious element in O. and N.T. revelation, are declared to be the product of Jewish "pride," national presumption, fanaticism, and selfishness, many of which were "falsified by the events," and never realised in the way prophets expected and foretold.¹ Some critics have

¹ Dr. G. Adam Smith among others, and following other Rationalistic critics, even to the figures of speech, says in his work on Isaiah, among countless other such things, of prophecies of Isaiah given by him as "the Word of the Lord," that they were falsified by events. "Isaiah's forecast of Judah's fate was therefore falsified by events," and "discredited by contemporary history" (vol. i. pp. 140, 141). The prophet himself, though speaking in the name of the Lord, is called a "visionary," presenting in one of the finest prophecies of the latter-day glory (Isa. 2¹⁻⁵) repeated and radiant in O. and N.T. a "Utopia" (p. 25), "the imperfectly idealised reflection of an age of material prosperity," the product of youthful pride, mistaken enthusiasm, and "prophetic apprenticeship," in which there is "much national arrogance, pride, and false optimism" (p. 34), "simply a less gross form of" Uzziah's and Israel's "religious presumption" (p. 61). Further, he asserts as "a fact that the more spiritual our notions are of the saving work of Jesus, the less inclined shall we be to claim the prophecies of Isaiah in proof of His deity" (p. 138), and "feel the *uselessness* of looking for them to prophecies that manifestly describe *purely earthly and civil functions*" (p. 140, italics ours),—all directly in the face of the teaching, usage, and authority of the inspired writers of the N.T., including our Lord and His apostles. This is fitly crowned when he gives his deliberate and concluding statement as to the inspiration of Isaiah and the whole O.T. prophets—which explains and expresses this whole spirit, principles, and attitude—"Isaiah prophesied and predicted all he did from loyalty to *two simple truths*, which he tells us he received from God Himself: that sin must be punished, and that the people of God must be saved. This simple faith, acting along with a wonderful knowledge of human nature and ceaseless vigilance of affairs, *constituted inspiration for Isaiah*" (p. 373); which is nothing more nor less than the possession of those moral and religious convictions that we all possess by nature and the ordinary illumination of the Spirit. Hence he says: "By a faith differing in degree *but not in kind* from ours, these men became prophets of God" (p. 372). And he consistently illustrates the thoroughly naturalistic character of the whole thing by comparing the prophetic inspiration to what "men of science have," by "their knowledge of the laws and principles of nature," or the general has by "taking for granted" that the sun will rise, and that the laws

boldly gone the length of denying miracle and prediction entirely. Others minimise them, and declare them to be hindrances rather than helps to faith, and behind our age. Yet our Lord laid such stress on them, and made the rejection of Him in the light of them the crowning sign and proof of their sin and obstinacy. "The same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5³⁶); "The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me" (John 10²⁵); "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works" (John 10³⁸); "Or else believe Me for the very works' sake" (John 14¹¹); "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15^{24, 22}). These show something of the great stress Christ laid on His works. Therefore our Lord in making so much of His miracles erred, and was not so wise as our modern would-be apologists! And His apostles, who spake as God's "Spirit gave them utterance," also erred in making so much of the miracles, and specially of the resurrection on which they base all, the preaching of which by the Spirit's power created Christianity in an organised form. And God also must have erred in giving such power and in effecting such miracles. So that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are on this theory less wise than our modern omniscient apologists! Others fitly crown their unbelief by an avowed or implicit denial of the supernatural altogether; holding that the religion of Jesus is simply one of the principal religions of the world, the pure product of natural evolution from the religious nature of man. Others, apparently evading or disavowing this, but holding largely the same principles, pursuing mainly the same methods,

of nature will hold (p. 214); and what Mazzini the Italian patriot—whom with Isaiah he classes among "prophets"—had when describing his career,—being "the *same divine movement* upon different natures" (pp. 85–86). All this nullifies direct prediction, revelation, and inspiration, properly so called, virtually evaporates revelation and the supernatural in O.T. prophecy, and practically reduces Scripture to the level of uninspired religious literature, and not differing in *kind* from other literature. Fuller refutation of such naturalistic theories, and evaporation of both inspiration and revelation, are given in Book VI. and Appendix. See also Dr. W. Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, in which he uses of such representations of Isaiah and his prophecy (ch. 2²⁻⁶) the strong words of our Lord, "we should *greatly err* if we imagined" such delusions.

and arriving generally at similar results, have so sought to naturalise and minimise the predictive and miraculous elements of prophecy as to betray their inward sympathy with the naturalistic criticism,—as if they were ashamed of, and had thus to apologise for appearing to recognise the supernatural. Hence the usual term for prediction is not prophecy properly so called, but “forecast.” Yea, even when appearing to recognise prediction of the future, not only is the term habitually used to express this “forecast” or “anticipation,” but these and cognate terms are used in many cases so as to imply that such prognostications were not a supernatural revelation given by inspiration of God, or anything entitled to that designation, but only such “forecasts” as any sensible man, in sympathy with God, with strong moral sense and natural sagacity, cognisant of the facts and realising the situation, might naturally presage and predict, without any supernatural revelation whatever.¹ So that large parts of the O.T. essential elements—yea, the main substance, which is there given as true, trustworthy, and the very Word of God, on which the N.T. is based, in which it is rooted, and without which it is inexplicable, unreliable, misleading, and delusive, is declared to be, and treated as, fiction and fable imposed as fact, by means of fraud or literary licence, on a credulous people!

And yet these are the men who have been supposed to have been chosen and inspired of God to be the best moral and religious teachers of the world, designed to raise the race to the highest moral and spiritual elevation; and whom men have been wont to regard as the Divinely-selected and Divinely-inspired media of a Divine revelation from a God of truth and holiness! Sufficiently strange and startling results surely these, raising moral problems obviously perplexing enough; and forcing us to face difficulties and contradictions in ethics and religion, compared with which the difficulties of even the most extreme traditionalism are as nothing. But stranger and more staggering still are the facts, proved on the large scale of nations and ages, that the writings of these very men, received as true, have been the

¹ Isaiah, for example, is a good sagacious statesman, with strong moral convictions and deep religious sympathies and vivid realisations of God,—like say, Mr. Gladstone,—but simply that, with no direct revelations and predictions from God. See Appendix, and Dr. G. A. Smith's *Isaiah*.

most potent moral levers in the elevation of mankind, the most powerful spiritual forces in the renovation of the race, and the mightiest elevatory factors in the history of the world. Wherever they have come, and just in proportion as they have been received, believed, and obeyed as the very Word of God, before the brightness of their shining darkness—moral, intellectual, and spiritual—has fled away, new moral life and spiritual fruitfulness have arisen, like flowers and fruits under summer's sunlight; and men and nations have invariably risen to a higher intellectual, moral, and spiritual level, as if by spontaneous outcome and natural law. The men who can rise over such ethical difficulties, believe such moral contradictions, and swallow such impossible miracles in the spiritual world, and who from sheer logical necessity *have* to accept such palpable absurdities, may be scholars and advanced critics, but they must be credulous indeed if they can imagine that sensible men can believe them to be theologians, or philosophers, or consistent thinkers, or men of common sense. And certainly the last thing they should do is to charge others with credulity; for such credulity I have not found, no, not in absolute inerrancy or the most absurd traditionalism!

THE ANTI-SUPERNATURALISTS ARE JUSTIFIED ON THE ERRORISTS' PRINCIPLES.

The consistent and only logical position is with the leading avowed Rationalists and anti-supernaturalists,¹ such as Kuenen, Wellhausen, and Reuss, who have been largely the teachers of the others, and are by far the ablest of these destructive critics. They wholly deny the supernatural, and reject the O.T. as the Word of God,—only, however, to find themselves confronted with the hard facts of history and the demonstration of centuries that this by them dishonoured and dethroned Bible is, and has proved itself to be, the wisdom and the power of God to men's salvation, the world's regenerator and moral elevator. This will be more fully shown when dealing with the facts apologetically. Meanwhile, in stating the question, they disclose how delusive is the idea that the controversy is about trivialities, or that it is merely, or mainly, a question about what has been called the *absolute* inerrancy of Scripture, whatever that may mean.

¹ Müller, Tylor, Renan, Baur, etc.

ERRONEOUSNESS SPECIALLY ALLEGED OF ITS MORAL AND
RELIGIOUS TEACHING—FIRST ADDUCED.

From the mere enumeration and synopsis of things assailed, and the elements eliminated by these various Rationalistic theories and averments, it is evident, as far as the O.T. is concerned, that the real question is not at all about things trivial, but about things essential—yea, in fact, about everything most surely held by the Christian Church from the beginning. The doctrine of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture pervades them all. The principles of the Rationalistic theory are implied in the least pronounced of them. And the denial of the supernatural in the religion of Israel is common to the ablest, most advanced, and most thoroughgoing of them. So that if we accept the so-called results of many of the ablest and most advanced critics, we shall have to deny the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture in everything peculiar to and characteristic of O.T. Revelation. We must hold that its representations are largely misrepresentations, the impressions made on reading it are mostly false, if not designedly misleading; and that the alleged facts and narratives are pious frauds, fabricated for selfish ends. And when these results are received, we are forced to the conclusion that the pervasive and fundamental claim of the O.T. to be the Word of God, of Divine origin, truth, and authority, is untenable and false; and that, therefore, the whole teaching of Christ and His apostles in endorsing this claim is erroneous, misleading, and wrong. So similarly of the N.T.

IN THE N.T. ANTAGONISM ALLEGED BETWEEN THE WRITERS
AND CONTRADICTIONS IN THE WRITINGS.

It is not merely difficulties in harmonies or discrepancies in details with which the N.T. is charged, but errors and contradictions in an indefinite and indefinable number of things and kinds of things. It is usual for those who deny the truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture to support their contention by charging James with a strong prejudice for Judaism, Peter with a bias towards traditionalism, John with a love for Gnostic Transcendentalism, and Paul with one-sided and mis-

leading idealism, and narrow and false traditionalism, and semi-fanatic enthusiasm. Our Lord and His apostles are charged with taking their teaching largely from the traditional teaching of the times, without examination, and with an uncritical, if not culpable, traditionalism, and with borrowing much of the outstanding theology of the N.T. from the often erroneous Apocryphal Books,—especially from the highly-coloured and misleading so-called Book of Enoch.

Many of the narratives of the same events in various Gospels are said to be discrepant and contradictory, displaced in time, and giving often misleading and irreconcilable impressions. Many of the root-facts and foundation-histories—such as the narratives of the miraculous birth of our Lord and His genealogies, the temptation, the existence and casting out of devils, the representations of the second coming, the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment, and with some the whole miraculous elements of the N.T.—are declared to be legendary, non-historical or unreal,—fiction imposed as fact upon a credulous age. Even the accounts of the crucial and cardinal facts of the incarnation, the death and the resurrection of our Lord, which are the very citadel, basis, and roots of all our faith and hope, are declared to be irreconcilable and self-contradictory. Thus the essential facts on which our whole faith hangs are, through the alleged discrepancies and contradictions and the unreliability of the record, by some thrown into discredit, by others wrapped in hopeless uncertainty,—warranting agnosticism, by others still pronounced to be “fables manifestly forming on the Gospel page,”¹ and by others are ignored, denied, and held to be not facts but fables, not history but metaphysics to be summarily dismissed.² Were these assumptions and assertions, which imply the erroneousness and unreliability of the sources of our faith, admitted, all would have room and reason to hold that after all Christianity was based upon imposture or delusion.

Then the teaching of Paul is said to be antagonistic to the teaching of the Twelve, specially of Peter and James. John is alleged to have an entirely different and utterly irreconcilable view of the life, work, character, and teaching of Christ from the Synoptists. By many modern critics, even those comparatively

¹ Matthew Arnold, *Literature and Dogma*.

² The Ritschlians and others.

conservative, the Synoptic Gospels we have are held not to be the original Gospels at all, nor even more or less perfect copies of them ; but mere compilations made by we know not whom, and seemingly without supernatural inspiration, simply according to the ordinary judgment, special aim, and natural idiosyncrasy of each writer, and made from a groundwork of discourses somewhat like Matthew's, and a book of narratives like Mark's, but in no real sense the veritable works of Matthew, Mark, or Luke ; and in no true or unique sense the inspired Word of God. While the Fourth Gospel and the other Johannine writings are by critics of note alleged to be not the writings of the Apostle John, but of some Neo-Platonic philosopher, who attempted to present an idealistic compound of certain elements of Christian truth with Alexandrian Gnosticism. In order to give it the greater weight and currency, he issued it as the genuine writings of the Apostle John, although he never wrote a syllable of it ; and put the whole discourses, of which it is so largely made up, into the lips of Christ, although He had never uttered a word of them. Further, there was also the exploded tendency school,¹ which place the N.T. writers in two antagonistic camps, each pressing their own peculiar views in opposition to the others ; so that the different parts of the N.T. are contradictory in teaching and tendency, and consequently exclude and annihilate each other.

THE GOSPELLERS AND ANTI-PAULITES WHO PUT CHRIST IN ANTITHESIS AND ANTAGONISM TO THE APOSTLES.

There is, too, a large and increasing number of recent critics, some of them otherwise generally orthodox theologians, who disparage the other writers and writings of the N.T. when compared with the Gospels, especially the Synoptics. They regard the others as not only not infallible and unauthoritative, but narrow, one-sided, and often erroneous, and misleading in their statements, standpoints, reasonings, and distinctive teaching. Some supposed to be generally Calvinistic in their theology seem never to weary of proclaiming the injury they have suffered from Paul, and through having derived their first conceptions and convictions of the Gospel from his writings instead of from the Gospels. Now, notwithstanding all the vaunted breadth and

¹ Attempted to be revived in new form by Pfeleiderer, etc.

freshness of this view, these "Gospellers," as they glory in calling themselves, advance really a narrow, one-sided, and unscientific theory, rooted in a false principle. It has otherwise in various forms repeatedly appeared in the history of the Church, and found its extreme exemplification in the Gospel of Marcion the heretic.

Besides that it raises many fatal difficulties, it is inconsistent with several cherished principles and favourite positions of the schools of critics that advocates it. If believed, it is in itself, and still more in its applications and presuppositions, most damaging to, if not destructive of, the trustworthiness of the N.T., and indirectly of the authority of Christ. *First.* It denies the progressiveness of Revelation, which is a sure and pregnant fact, and a favourite view of these critics up to the Gospels. They then, however, act most unnaturally; for by their unscientific and reactionary theory they suddenly arrest and abruptly end progress, just as the great and growing tree of Revelation was its completion, crown, and full fruition.

Second. It ignores the fact that the Gospels are at best but fragmentary, and largely lacking in consecutive doctrinal teaching, as they consist mainly of facts about, and utterances of, our Lord freely given, which the other N.T. writings were designed to complete, interpret, and combine into a coherent and magnificent scheme of spiritual thought—of God-given Revelation.

Third. It implies that they themselves, uninspired and not overwise men, are better able to interpret and apply aright the facts and truths of the Gospels than do the authoritative interpretations graciously given us through men inspired of God for the specific purpose. For Christ specially promised the Spirit to lead these into all truth, in order that they might deliver a full, final, trustworthy, and Divinely-authoritative Revelation. This theory in effect disowns their Divine inspiration, and practically discredits their writings and the authority of their teaching,—not only in little things, but in essential things and virtually in everything. The whole assumption of these critics is that they have been able, by a fresh and independent study of the Gospels, free from the errors and misconceptions which misled the apostles, to correct by their superior interpretations the many mistakes, misconceptions, and misleading teachings of the Divinely-inspired apostles,—and that, too, from these very apostles' discredited

writings! Yet these writings are declared to be "not the word of man," but "in truth the Word of God"; because, as Jesus promised them, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." The daring but ridiculous presumption that pervades and underlies this tone of superior knowledge, and assumption of truer interpretation of the mind of Christ than His very apostles chosen and inspired for the express purpose, by cock-sure critics two millenniums away from Him, and dependent wholly for all they know of Him or His teaching upon these very apostolic writings that they presume to correct and discredit, which is so prevalent in much of our recent criticism and literature,—is one of the most notable but most ludicrous illustrations of what has, with well-deserved irony, been called "the omniscience of nineteenth century criticism,"—an omniscience which, however, puts on its own fool's-cap in the conflicts and contradictions and aberrations of its vaunted "assured results." One is not surprised at this or anything the avowed Rationalists, the Ritschlians, and other unspiritual errorists may presume to assert and do; but one is grieved and amazed to see some spiritual and otherwise sensible men lending themselves to such delusion and absurdity.

Fourth. It goes directly, as shown above, in the teeth of the teaching and implication of the Gospels themselves, which plainly point to and promise a fuller and more perfect Revelation. And it actually contradicts the explicit and reiterated words of Christ Himself as given in these very Gospels. For in the very words of these Gospels our Lord is represented as repeatedly in various forms distinctly declaring that He has many things to say unto them which they could not bear until He had left them, and the Spirit of truth had come upon them in the plenitude of His power, to enable them to receive them and to understand His own words. Therefore, if we are to receive as true, or even in substance as trustworthy, the words of our Lord as given in these Gospels, which they profess to magnify, in order to discredit or minimise the truth and importance of the other N.T. writings, they expressly and emphatically teach that, under the fulness of the Spirit's power, they would be able to receive, know, and utter fuller, higher, and richer revelations of truth and grace than those contained in any words that their spiritual state while He was with them permitted Him to utter or them to understand.

So that if we are to accept the words and promises, the facts and implications of these Gospels, which these theorists credit themselves with pre-eminently magnifying, and on which they avowedly base all their teaching and theorising, we must believe that since the Gospels are almost wholly composed of records of the words and works of Jesus, the revelations in the other N.T. Scriptures, expressed "as the Spirit gave them utterance," were the highest and fullest, the most perfect and the final revelations of the mind of Christ and of the grace of God. And we must, therefore, reject the narrow and reactionary theory of these "Gospellers" as contrary not only to Scripture generally, but to these Gospels specially, and to the most explicit and decisive words of Christ.

Fifth. Nor is this all. It conflicts with another pet and prime theory of these same critics. For the first principle or presupposition of all their criticism is, as indicated above, that we have not the original Gospels, nor copies of them; that, in fact, as many of them aver, there never existed four original Gospels; but that the Gospels we have are simply compilations made by unknown and seemingly uninspired writers, along with other sources more or less truthful:—a groundwork of a book of discourses (logia) akin to the discourses of Matthew, a book of narratives similar to Mark's, and now recently a third source, a book of discourses like John's; none of these being, however, the veritable writings of Matthew, Mark, or John.¹ I cannot here stay to refute all the errors, false principles, and untenable presuppositions in and under these theories. And it is too late now even to ridicule the manner in which every new-spun theory of the order and origin of the Gospels has, to the amusement and contempt of all sensible men, passed through all the possible permutations and combinations, each replacing the other, and passing into oblivion as rapidly as flying clouds across wintry skies.² Suffice it to say that this has been rendered unnecessary, because they have generally refuted and devoured each other, while the best scholarship of the world has exploded and pulverised most of them as they arose; and the four Gospels remain in substantially the same regard as ever as the Word of God given through inspired apostles and evangelists.

¹ Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*.

² See Bernard Weiss' *Introduction to the N.T.*

Any shadows of these theories that may still remain are at most unproved hypotheses, which men of sense cannot be expected to disturb themselves much about, or reasonably be expected to believe or act upon. But if these theories of the origin of the Gospels are true, or if there is any measure of truth in them, then these Gospels which they magnify, especially the Synoptics, as incomparably the best and most reliable part of the N.T., and the most perfect part of Revelation, are thrown into helpless uncertainty as to their authorship and inspiration, their authority and trustworthiness. On what reasonable grounds, then, can men be asked to receive books so composed as in any real sense the Word of God, or what rational right have they to any unique place in men's religious regard?

The undisputed Epistles of the inspired Apostle Paul,¹ to mention no other N.T. writings, have surely on this supposition a far higher claim to reverence and regard as the Word of God, and as true and trustworthy records of the Christian religion; as certainly they are on such a view entitled to a much higher value in the evidence for Christianity. The fact that even the extremest Rationalism has been constrained to admit their Pauline authorship, has properly been regarded by every wise and able apologete as of immense and unique evidential value in answering unbelief. Nor has scepticism even itself refused to admit its weight and force. But if this theory of the origin of the Synoptics is correct, not only is their own trustworthiness and authority invalidated, but with the other theory of the incomparable superiority and reliability of these Gospels, the authority and reliability of the other N.T. writings are, *à fortiori*, discredited if not destroyed. So that the Divine authority and actual trustworthiness of the whole of the N.T. writings are thus invalidated if not annihilated. How idle and deluding, then, is all this talk about the question being merely a matter of little things, trifles, immaterial details! It is obviously a question about everything most precious to the Christian heart and the ground of hope for man—the very sources, bases, and truth of our Christian faith.

¹ Romans, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW EASY AND NECESSARY THE DESCENT FROM ALL THEORIES OF INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS TO RATIONALISM AND SCEPTICISM !

How easy is the transition from such theorising to the most avowed and extreme Rationalism and unbelief ! How easily can Dr. Martineau, for example, from the results, principles, and presuppositions of these theories, justify and deduce his Unitarianism, Rationalism, and utterly destructive criticism of the N.T. as a whole, and of the Gospels in particular, and of all that is essential and peculiar to the Christian faith therein. They all deny the truthfulness and Divine authority, and assert, or assume, and imply the indefinite erroneousness and illimitable unreliability of Scripture. They all discredit it, and undermine the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the writings and writers that constitute the sources and bases of our faith.

DR. LADD AND DR. MARTINEAU ARRIVE AT DIAMETRICALLY
OPPOSITE RESULTS FROM THE COMMON RATIONALISTIC
PRINCIPLE.

Professor Ladd, for example, in his two immense volumes on *The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, finds, as the result of adopting and applying the Rationalistic principle, which assumes the right and function of reason to sit in judgment on Scripture to ascertain what in it is true, that the only reliable elements therein, besides the ethical principles common more or less to it with other religions and philosophies, are the Messianic elements connected with Redemption. But he, as usual, leaves us in blissful ignorance as to what these specifically are,

and where explicitly they are recorded, and how we can inerrantly find them amid the mass of erroneous and unreliable materials with which they are surrounded, and amid which they are embedded, like veins or grains of golden ore in vast fields of worthless material. The Lord by the Psalmist says His Word is like "silver seven times purified."

Assuming and applying the same Rationalistic principle of the supremacy of Reason over Revelation as over everything else, and counting it "treason"¹ to do anything else, Dr. Martineau finds that the elements which above all others are to be rejected as false and pernicious, are just those Messianic and Redemptive elements that Dr. Ladd holds to be true and of Divine authority.² Dr. Martineau, without a moment's hesitation, or an attempt at proof, declares these, on his own infallible intuition and indubitable authority, to be the mere creations of the ecstatic imagination of devoted, but deluded disciples—the encrustations of ignorant, superstitious, and enthusiastic minds working on the legends and traditions of credulous ages! In these superstitious and pernicious elements he includes all the Messianic teaching and references of the O.T. and the New; and along with them, and as part and fruits of them, the Incarnation and Divinity of our Lord, His death for man's redemption,—the very idea of an atonement for the sin of men by a sinless Saviour and a vicarious sacrifice being to him impossible, immoral, and a blot on the character of God; as also justification by faith, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension to glory, His second coming, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment with its eternal issues.³

Like Dr. Ladd, he accepts as agreeable to reason much of the ethical teaching of the N.T., and expresses it with peculiar beauty and power. He, however, regards this teaching as not peculiar to Christianity, but a common product of man's moral and religious nature, expressed more or less fully and truly, though not so well as in the Bible, in the theologies and philosophies of other religions and races. So that in this two-fold way everything distinctive of Christianity is eliminated and rejected as non-Christian.³ The remarkable thing, however, is

¹ Dr. Martineau's *The Seat of Authority in Religion*.

² Dr. Ladd's *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*.

³ *Ibid.* p. 650.

that, on the very same Rationalistic principle, he arrives at directly opposite results. His reason, sitting in judgment on Scripture, especially on the N.T., rejects as superstitious, pernicious, and intolerable what Dr. Ladd's reason in the same attitude and on the same principle receives as true, trustworthy, and authoritative. It must be owned, too, that Dr. Martineau rejects with as much plausibility and perversity those elements that Dr. Ladd accepts, as Dr. Ladd rejects the other parts and elements of Scripture. But the point and force of their direct contradiction are that the Unitarian Doctor arrives at his diametrically opposite results on substantially the same principles and with the same presupposition as the Christian Doctor, even the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture on the one hand, and, on the other, the right and power of reason to judge and determine what in the volume of Revelation is true and what false.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SETTLE THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS IN
DISPUTE BETWEEN THEM WITH THE COMMON RATIONALISTIC
PRINCIPLE.

So that it seems impossible on these principles to prove that the Unitarian is wrong or that the Christian is right in their contradictory conclusions drawn from similar premises. From the very nature of the case, on these principles, the controversy cannot be conclusively settled. Nor is it possible to determine definitely, or to ascertain infallibly, or to declare authoritatively, what is true and trustworthy and what false and misleading in Scripture. Finality, or even practical certainty, far less Divine authority, as to the will of God for our salvation, is thus evidently impossible on any theory of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, with its inevitable consequent of the supremacy of human reason over Divine Revelation, from the simple fact that man's errant and erring reason becomes the only standard, the supreme judge, and the ultimate authority in all such things. And as one man's mind may be as good as another's or better, and as one class of reasons will weigh with one class of mind and another with another, it is manifest that a final and authoritative settlement of such matters is from the nature of things an impossibility, without an independent and authoritative

external standard—even the authority of God expressed in His Word. Every man must believe just as he likes ; all may believe what is false ; and certainly no man's belief can be authoritative over others, or binding upon the conscience of any other. Every man becomes an authority to himself in religious belief ; and this, taken along with the fact, proved throughout all ages, races, and religions, that “the world by wisdom knew not God,” would show that, on the theory of indefinite erroneousness, Revelation was a failure, God's purpose in giving His Word has been defeated, and mankind is in darkness even until now as to the things most vital for us to know, and benighted humanity is now as of old left like

“ An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.”

THE ONLY WAY TO SETTLE CONTROVERSIES IN RELIGION IS BY
HOLDING THE BIBLE CLAIM TO BE THE WORD OF GOD,
AND THE DIVINE RULE OF FAITH, AND JUDGE OF
CONTROVERSIES.

The only way in which effectually to refute this disastrous and absurd conclusion is by maintaining, in opposition to both classes of Rationalists, the claim of Scripture to be the Word of God, of Divine origin, truth, and authority. True, Dr. Ladd, as representative of a whole school, partially evangelical, would say that he accepts some parts, or rather elements, in Scripture as true and authoritative. But Dr. Martineau would say that he, too, holds the same about other elements in it ; only that he differs entirely, and contradicts Dr. Ladd directly, as to what these elements are,—Dr. Martineau rejecting just those very elements which Dr. Ladd accepts and *vice versa*. The only elements on which they would both generally agree are those ethical elements, common to Christianity with other religions and philosophies,—even those primitive and essential moral principles that are inherent elements in the constitution of man's moral nature, and not distinctive of Christianity at all. But when we press the question closer, and ask whether Dr. Martineau or Dr. Ladd is right as to the elements to be regarded as infallible and of Divine authority, immediately we are faced with

an interminable controversy, the final, authoritative, and inerrant settlement of which is, because of their common first principle, self-evidently an impossibility. And whatever else may be said or thought of the Bible claim to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, it manifestly has this decisive advantage over the others, that it supplies us with the means of a conclusive and authoritative settlement at least of all important questions on which men's salvation and eternity depend, and includes everything clearly taught in Scripture.

That this is the doctrine taught by the claim made by Scripture for itself is demonstrated above and below, if anything can be proved from the Bible. The difficulties supposed to be connected with it are not more, but less, than those connected with any of the essential doctrines of our faith, such as the Divinity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, the resurrection of the dead; and they are as nothing compared with the insuperable difficulties and inextricable confusions introduced by these or any other Rationalistic theories. Besides this, all these doctrines are based on this one; and, therefore, they are all discredited and undermined so far as it is invalidated or impinged upon.

I know that Dr. Ladd, Dr. Farrar, and others holding similar views of Scripture, would try to escape from the dilemma in which they are thus placed, along with able and avowed Rationalists like Dr. Martineau, by saying that they admit and maintain the infallible truth and Divine authority of Christ's teaching. But Dr. Martineau and his followers would not and do not deny this. On the contrary, they are much more guarded and reverential in their statements about His teaching than many who profess to hold His Divinity, but deny or question the infallibility of His teaching. But where Dr. Martineau and such like join issue with them is as to what *was* the teaching of Jesus. He maintains that most of what the Gospels give as the teaching and words of Christ are not His teaching at all,¹ but mainly the personal opinions of the writers. These opinions, he avers, were mostly the product of the current views and traditional ideas of the times, evincing no doubt more or less the new spirit Jesus had infused into religion, and containing amid

¹And here he is supported largely by Pfeiderer, the Ritschlians, and many other Rationalistic writers.

the mass of apostolic or post-apostolic ideas some genuine elements of His teaching. These elements he seeks by spiritual intuition and critical acumen to discover with these sufficiently startling results—*First*, that all the Messianic and Redemptive elements in Scripture are utterly and vehemently rejected as non-Christian and even immoral in the vital and crucial N.T. teaching on Redemption by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, the heart and burden of all Scripture. *Second*, that all which the Christian Church has from the beginning believed and taught in the creeds as the substance and essence of Christianity is a caricature of it—the worthless excrescences or pernicious accretions of it, with the solitary exception of repentance. *Third*, that almost the only things which constitute the Christian religion and belong to the teaching of Christ, are certain primary, ethical, religious truths and principles, which are not distinctive of Christianity or of the teaching of Christ, but which are more or less common to almost all religions and philosophies,—though Jesus gave them a new clearness, emphasis, significance, and potency, and infused into them a fresh life and creative spirit.

It may be said that criticism which leads to such results is so extreme and perverse as to require no refutation, and that, as Dr. Sanday says, anyone who so treats the evangelists excludes himself from the pale of reasonable criticism or just interpretation. This is doubtless largely true. But it must be admitted, on the other hand, that the author is most thoroughly sincere; that he has the strongest conviction of the truth of his results; that his is a mind of conspicuous ability and penetration, with an unsurpassed power of lucid and forceful expression; and that he manifestly means to be thorough in his investigations. Nor can it be denied that he can adduce in support of his conclusion, among others,—such things as the philosophic and seemingly idealised and Gnostic character of the Fourth Gospel,—so unlike what we should expect from Jesus, or a fisherman of Galilee; the apparent discrepancies of the Synoptics, which might be expected on his theory; the marked contrast, if not seemingly irreconcilable differences in facts, representations, and teaching between John's Gospel and the Synoptics, which his view might account for. He can also take advantage of and utilise many of the allegations and admissions of Trinitarian, and even in many

ways reputedly orthodox critics, who now without any Scripture warrant, and in face of Scripture teaching and the explicit words of Christ, never weary of emphasising and proclaiming the inferiority, degeneracy, and erroneousness of the apostles and evangelists when compared with the teaching of Jesus.

This Dr. Martineau can urge all the more that such critics press these views directly in the face of Christ's explicit promise of the Spirit to lead them into all truth ; and notwithstanding our entire dependence for everything we know about Him and His teaching upon these evangelists, whose unreliability and erroneousness have, *ex hypothesi*, been by them so zealously and ultroneously proclaimed. He can also adduce what they now with almost one accord, and often without limit or scruple, allege—the literary usage of these earlier times in explanation of the writers of the Gospels putting their own opinions and words into the lips of Jesus and giving them as His, though frequently a misconception or perversion of what He really taught. Though how this last can be ascertained, when we have only these untrustworthy and erroneous Gospels to inform us, is a puzzle to the careful, clear-thinking mind. Altogether, on such principles and presuppositions, Dr. Martineau has by their help, by deft manipulation and dexterous special pleading, made out a plausible, if a revolutionary and preposterous case.

THE COMMON RATIONALISTIC PRINCIPLE IMPLIED IN EVERY
THEORY OF INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS PRECLUDES FIN-
ALITY AND AUTHORITY ON ANY QUESTION OF RELIGION.

Most certainly the principle and presupposition by which he reached his results are identical with those of Dr. Ladd and others like him ; even the presupposition of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture and the Rationalistic principle of the competency, right, and obligation of reason to determine what is true and what false in Revelation. And the remarkable and decisive thing is that on this very principle of rational selection adopted by both, Dr. Martineau arrives at results that are irrational and directly the reverse of Dr. Ladd's. The Messianic and Redemptive elements connected with Christ, to which alone Dr. Ladd would admit anything like infallibility and Divine authority, are just the very elements which, *on the same principle*, and by

similar processes and assumptions, Dr. Martineau rejects with vehemence as false, pernicious, and contrary to the spirit as well as to the teaching of Christ. It is vain to reply that Dr. Martineau is wrong in his results ; for he assumes nothing but what the others assume, even the errancy and erroneousness of Scripture, with perhaps the possible exception of the words of Christ, if we can surely find them. The representations of these, however, on their common theory, are erroneous and unreliable, and therefore each erring and varying man must determine for himself, according to his own conception of what they probably would be. And he adopts only the same principle, even the right, duty, and power of reason, to distinguish the true from the false ; human reason thus becoming to both the final seat of authority and the ultimate standard of truth. By this process, on similar methods and considerations, all Scripture is tested by errant human reason presuming vainly to separate truth from error—the wheat from the chaff, in the Word of God !

If he regards as error what others regard as truth, and calls chaff what others call wheat, this matters not. The *principle is the same* in both. The principle gives the determinative power in such matters to human reason, each mind being of necessity the light and standard to itself. Therefore, whether right or wrong, it is authoritative to each. On the common principle it ought to be authoritative. It should and must be authoritative, though contradictory, to all who adopt or admit their common but self-stultifying principle. And should there be, as there are and must be, conflict and contradiction between the utterances of the authority in different minds, still, on the common principle, each is and ought to be, from the nature of the case, an authority to himself. Nor would it be right or reasonable to dispute the authority in any case, no matter how contradictory or absurd the deliverance or results might be, so long as the common principle is held.

THE IMPLIED SUPREMACY OF REASON OVER REVELATION
MAKES CERTAINTY AND AUTHORITY IN RELIGION IM-
POSSIBLE.

Nay more, it is from the very nature of things impossible to question the deliverance in a single case, however preposterous

it may be, if deliberately made, without impinging upon and violating the root-principle itself, and abandoning their whole position and contention. Yea, it is impossible, on this principle of the supreme authority of reason, to determine questions of religion and ethics, to settle conclusively any question in religion or morality, except the essential primary principles that lie embedded in the constitution of the human soul, and are its native elementary possession. For the ultimate authority, according to the principle itself, is in each the individual mind ; which varies with each individual, and often in the same individual at different times. What may be truth to one is error to another, and what was true at one time is false at another to the same person. So that on this principle certainty in religion is a manifest impossibility, and the effort to attain it is a palpable absurdity—a wild-goose chase !

These are surely sufficiently startling results ; but they are all the natural and necessary consequence of the same false and subversive principle. Dr. Martineau and others holding his and other beliefs come to Scripture with a philosophy and a theology. Postulating the fallibility and indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, and acting on the undoubted or admitted principle that man's own mind has to separate the truth from the error in Scripture, and to determine, not by simple interpretation of its meaning as true and trustworthy because God-breathed, but by a process of intuitional selection and critical elimination what is and is not to be believed therein, he easily arrives at results accordant with his preconceptions ; and by a free and ingenious grouping of cognate elements has no difficulty in finding confirmation of these from Scripture. So another with a different theology and philosophy, by a similar use of other elements and with similar plausibility, comes to opposite or different conclusions, and so on *ad infinitum*. This is precisely the way and principle on which so many of the German and other Rationalists arrive at and propound their antagonistic, ever-changing, and evanescent theories—by simply selecting those things and elements that suit their own preconceptions, and ignoring others.

Nor is it possible to prevent such pernicious playing with and pulverising of the Word of God, and such perverse abuse of so-called Bible criticism, except by maintaining the Bible claim of truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority ; and by

denying the right, power, or rationality of reason to reject its teaching or to question the truth of its statements, when their real meaning has been ascertained. Let, for example, the truthfulness of the Gospels be upheld, as it may well be, yea, has been for centuries in spite of the most searching criticism and the utmost perverse ingenuity of hostile scepticism; let it further be maintained, as it may be and has been triumphantly, in the light of the facts of Christ's explicit teaching, in which His trustworthiness, guaranteeing theirs, must be held decisive,—that the teaching of the Divinely-inspired apostles was as true and trustworthy as His, since, as He said, "It is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you": then an effectual arrest can be put upon this solemn trifling with Scripture, and all handling of the Word of God deceitfully; and upon all that destructive criticism and perverted speculation which pretend to discriminate the elements of truth in Christ's words from the masses of erroneous encrustation and degenerate teaching in the inspired writings of the apostles. For they can then be tied to the Written Word; and when that is properly interpreted, and its real meaning ascertained, that, then, is the very Word of God, of Divine origin, truth, and authority, which men must receive as such, and can reject only at their peril.

The difference between a Bible that, when truly interpreted and its intended meaning ascertained, is true, trustworthy, and divinely authoritative; and a Bible that, when its intended meaning is found, is still more or less untrue, untrustworthy, and unauthoritative—a mixture of truth and error, which errant and erring human reason, each man's variable mind must find as best it may—is in character simply essential, in thought radical, and in effect practically immeasurable. In the one all that is needed is simply interpretation. In the other, there must be after interpretation, the separation of the truth from the error with which it is inextricably mixed, and without any unerring standard or reliable means of separation; so that it is impossible to be sure of what is truth or error. In the one case the range of possible difference is limited to the simple ascertaining of the meaning, usually a limit not difficult to determine. In the other it is unlimited, and, from the very nature of the case, illimitable, the materials of determination or the means of certain

settlement being both awanting. The truth and the error are both indefinite and indeterminable quantities, and the controversy about them is therefore of necessity an interminable controversy. Nor is it possible, since there is no final and authoritative standard, to constrain the belief or require the faith of anyone.

RATIONALISM WOULD VIOLATE ITS ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE IF
IT CLAIMED FINALITY, CERTAINTY, OR AUTHORITY IN
RELIGION.

Yea, the very attempt to do so is an infringement, if not a violation, of the root-principle of the theory. So that Rationalism, to be true to its principle, must abandon reason in despair, forsake its own standard, and reject its own principles; and leave its votaries, except in the most elementary things, to the lightless, abyssmal negations of a hopeless Agnosticism—its natural result, its only rational termination. And in any case the results of it as shown above have, as a matter of fact, been diametrically opposite and mutually annihilative, as expressed in the directly contradictory conclusions of Dr. Ladd and Dr. Martineau, and many mutually devouring rationalistic and rationalising schools.

All the above has been adduced mainly to show how false and delusive is the idea that it is merely a question of unimportant trifles, not affecting any important truth or religious interest, which these various Rationalistic theories about Scripture raise. Whatever else it may have done or failed to do, it has at least demonstrated the falseness and absurdity of that deluding assertion. Taking two outstanding examples from different and in many ways antagonistic schools of Rationalists, it has been shown that on the same common principle—the principle common more or less to every theory of the errancy or erroneousness of Scripture—they come to directly opposite conclusions as to what is true and false in Scripture; and that between these conflicting conclusions almost everything peculiar to Revelation and distinctive of Christianity would be rejected and destroyed.

ALL THEORIES OF INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS CONTAIN
THE SAME RATIONALISTIC PRINCIPLE.

The same might be shown in detail through all the permutations and combinations in all the other advocates of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, from the least Rationalistic to the most extreme and avowedly sceptical theorists, like, say Matthew Arnold. He distinctly rejects Christianity, and repudiates everything distinctive of the Christian faith; yet he professes to have found by literary intuition a something in Scripture that is true, which he calls "the Secret of Jesus," but which had eluded the discovery of all the theologians and Churches until now, when he by a unique literary and moral intuition—the product of assumed familiarity with the literature of the world—has been able to discover it, as a vein of golden ore among the crude and misleading masses of Jewish superstition and apostolic delusion. But when we inquire what this wonderful secret is, it simply amounts to that veriest platitude of natural theology, the merest elementary dictate of conscience, that there is a power outside ourselves that makes for righteousness. And this is *all* that he finds true in Scripture or Christ's teaching, which, of course, every student of philosophy knows to be not peculiar to Christ or Scripture, but existed long before, yea, since the creation of man in the image of God. He arrives at this conclusion on the same assumption—the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture—and by the adoption of essentially the same principle, the right and power of reason to separate the truth from the error in the teaching of God's Word; and he proceeds by a similar process, only more arbitrarily applied, as Dr. Martineau and Dr. Ladd.

DR. HORTON'S DENUNCIATIONS OF THE BIBLE CLAIM, AND
HIS DELUSION THAT ITS TRUTHS ARE INDEPENDENT OF
CRITICISM.

But perhaps the best and most significant illustration of the points above is to be found in the writings of one of the most recent, prolific, and oracular assailants of the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Holy Scripture, Dr. Horton. No man has more frequently or vehemently asseverated that the truths of Revelation are independent of criticism,—a mere

repetition of Baur, of exploded Tübingenism,—and unaffected by its results. He evidently does not know that the criticism of the ablest Rationalistic critics not only affects Revelation, properly so called, but annihilates it, destroys the foundation of every distinctive truth of it; and many of them deny both Revelation and the supernatural altogether, both in the religion of Israel and of Christ.¹ No recent author has written so contemptuously of the maintainers of the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of God's Word. Yet he is scrupulously careful to avoid grappling with their arguments or facing their real position, preferring prudently the easier but less noble method of giving assertion for argument, vain fancy for sure fact, and caricature for refutation. It would be difficult to find a single writer on the questions so full of errors and contradictions, exaggerations and vagaries, or at once so superficial and one-sided, loose and illogical in treatment of any single point of the controversy. Nor have I read any author on the subjects that exhibits such unguardedness of statement, such innocence of the first elements and conditions of the controversy, along with such oracular assurance and assumed supereminence, or one so unfitted, by lack of logical consistency and of thoroughness of investigation, of handling such questions, or more wanting in that reverence for the Word of the Lord, without which they should never be handled at all. With a pretentiousness equalled only by the unthoroughness, no one has so presumptuously dared to sit in judgment on the Divine book; and, because lacking the knowledge or spiritual discernment to understand the same, to pronounce the condemnation in many parts, large sections, and vital elements of the "Oracles of God,"² which in their integrity the Son of God received with such reverence, used with such confidence, sealed with His Divine authority, and declared the inviolability of in His most majestic utterance, that heaven and earth should pass away, but that one jot or one tittle thereof should in no wise pass away till all should be fulfilled.

¹ Such as Kuenen, Wellhausen, Strauss, Renan, Baur, Pfleiderer, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, Dr. Samuel Davidson, the Ritschlians generally, and many of the Germans and their followers, some of whom have been or are leaders of Criticism and the teachers of other critics.

² See his *Inspiration and the Bible*, *Revelation and the Bible*, and other writings in the *Christian World*, etc.

And yet Dr. Horton has the audacity and delusion to assert, and by the assertion to mislead the ignorant and unwary, that nothing of any importance is being lost, when the very chart of men's salvation is slipping from their grasp, and the title-deeds of their Redemption are being torn to tatters before their eyes, with no criterion to tell them what fragments should be saved from the wreck, except the *ipse dixit* of reckless latter-day oracles. Appropriately in his latest deliverance,¹ consistent at last, he utters beyond the seas what was looming out at home, the crowning oracle that there was nothing really supernatural in the inspiration of the apostles and prophets—nothing but what any man may attain, what some men of recent times have attained (whose names and experience he mentions, though they would have been the first to deny it), what every spiritual man in measure possesses, and evidently *nothing really different in kind* from what implicitly he has himself attained, and doubtless implies he has expressed in his recent oracular writings. Comparing these with the writings of Isaiah or Paul, any man may see by simple inspection that this latest and boldest champion of Rationalism and assailant of the Bible claim, has at length put the natural crown and appropriate topstone upon his own and others' Rationalistic theories.

By thus attempting to bring down the inspiration of the apostles and prophets from the supernatural elevation, which God by His Spirit and Christ by His special promise placed it on, to the level of ordinary spiritual illumination, with nothing in it different in *kind*, purpose, and effect from what any man may attain, and some recent men have attained, though it is a strange delusion, both inspiration and Revelation are disowned and evaporated in any proper sense, violating both reason and Revelation, and proving beyond a doubt, notwithstanding all the vaunted light and advancement, the indefinite erroneousness of such oracles as these. They thus serve themselves heirs to the deluded and visionary votaries of fanaticism and superstition, which have appeared from time to time as beacon lights on the horizon of Church history,—such as the Montanists of the early ages, the Anabaptists of the German Reformation, the Latter-day Saints, and the New Prophets and Spiritualists of our own day,—without having even the literary intuition of the apostles of sweetness

¹ *Verbum Dei*.

and light. How true is it that extremes meet, and that scepticism ends in credulity ! How significant the spectacle of Rationalism joining hands with superstition, naturalism uniting with fanaticism ! How suggestive to behold the spirits of expired superstitions and pernicious delusions rising again from the dead, and becoming once more embodied in the oracles and publications of such latter-day prophets, in order to deny to the oracles of God what is claimed for their own vain imaginations !

CONCLUSION. ALL DECLARATIONS THAT THE ERRORISTS' THEORIES AND CRITICISM AFFECT ONLY SMALL THINGS ARE A DELUSION AND A SNARE.

And yet in the face of all this, we are assured that it is all a question about trifles, and that, forsooth, nothing of any moment is concerned in criticism, or theories of inspiration, or doctrines of Revelation, or views on Holy Scripture ; when in reality it is questions about everything most surely held among believers in Revelation, when everything on which men's eternity depends is imperilled by such theories and speculations, and when, in fact, if such views prevail, all is lost with the loss of a sure basis and reliable source of faith. All this talk and protestation, that it is only trivialities which are concerned in this controversy, is an utter delusion, a mischievous deception that hides the real issues. What would these Rationalistic critics care merely to have liberty to criticise and make corrections in details ? They give prominence to this aspect merely to allay suspicion and disarm opposition, in order that having got this freedom they may ride roughshod with full rein over the whole range and substance of Revelation. This is what, as a matter of fact, they are now doing on every hand, without let or hindrance, till the whole Word of God is fragmented, discredited, and pulverised between them. They deny the right of anyone, even of Christ Himself, to restrict or hinder them ; for "the rights of criticism," they declare, "must be pressed," as they phrase it, "even against the Master Himself." And here again, as often before, heaves in view, through the mists of lesser controversies, the inevitable issues and awful end of them—the ever momentous, fundamental, and supreme religious question, "Is Christ infallible as a teacher ?"

CHAPTER VII.

THE STATUS QUÆSTIONIS.

HAVING thus cleared the way and simplified the issues, we shall now, in closing this book, briefly state the question, and then proceed to the proof and argument. What, then, is the real state of the question? It is all-important to state clearly and to grasp firmly what the real state of the question is (*status quæstionis*). For the proper statement of it is in this case, as in many others, largely the virtual settlement of it to all who tremble at the Word of the Lord, and to all who in any sense regard the Bible as the Word of God. The state of the question then is this. If the Bible claims to be true, trustworthy, of Divine origin and authority,—the Word of God,—it necessarily follows either that the Scriptures, as originally written, were so and cannot be indefinitely erroneous and untrustworthy, or that the Bible is untrue in its root doctrine, and that its fundamental claim is false. It cannot be the Word of God, but must be merely the word of not only fallible, but untruthful or incredible men. This being so, it is self-evident that any theory that asserts or implies the indefinite erroneousness and illimitable unreliability of Scripture, as the prevalent theories do, would not only logically land in utter Rationalism, but would necessarily confuse and overthrow the whole truth and authority of Scripture. For, as will appear more fully soon, its claim is expressly placed at the basis of the truthfulness of all its teaching, is postulated as the ground of all its statements, and is necessarily implied in that Divine authority with which it speaks in the name of the Lord.

In various conceivable circumstances, indeed, we should not be shut up to such a conclusion. If, for example, we had merely a historical Christianity—a Bible simply recording the facts of

Christ's life, written by fallible but credible men, like any ordinary good biography, we should not be driven to this. Or if we had a religion supernaturally revealed, recorded by not infallible but fairly trustworthy writers; or if we had even a faith, Divinely revealed, recorded in a perfectly Divinely-inspired book, but without any affirmation, claim, teaching, or implication in that book in regard to its own Divine inspiration, or truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority, we should not in the same manifest and unquestionable way be shut up to this conclusion. Yea, earnest seekers might even on the lowest of these suppositions have sufficient light to lead to Christ and find salvation. For, as Dr. Bannerman says,¹ we would have (rather "might have had") an historical Christianity not greatly differing in its facts and doctrines from an inspired Christianity. But this is clearly not the state of things. On the contrary, all admit that the Bible *has* something to say in regard to its own origination, inspiration, truthfulness, and Divine authority. It indeed has a very great deal to say upon this subject; and it founds all its teaching and statements on all other subjects on its teaching and pervasive claim on this subject. It makes this its preliminary and fundamental teaching, and postulates this throughout all its other teaching and statements. What this teaching is must be determined by a careful, thorough, and extensive examination and combination of all that Scripture, either directly or indirectly, teaches thereon.

THE DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE AS HELD BY THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND SET FORTH IN THE CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM.

The teaching of the Church, as expressed in the creeds of Christendom and in the works of its greatest representative teachers, is in effect that the Bible has been so written that it is in the highest sense of the expression "the Word of God"—the book of which God is the author and for which He is responsible, since all Scripture is God-breathed (*θεόπνευστος*), and is therefore true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. It is therefore all "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3¹⁶). Though it was written through the instrumentality of fallible and imperfect men, yet

¹ Dr. Bannerman on *The Inspiration of Scripture*.

such an infallible Divine influence was imparted to them, and such an unerring and pervasive control was exercised over them by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that it secured that all they wrote for God was true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. So that all they recorded or uttered under this Divine guidance and through this Spirit's inspiration was as truly written and spoken by God through them as though their instrumentality had not been used at all. And although it was written by means of men of different ages, lands, and conditions, of diverse tastes, temperaments, talents, and attainments; and though each wrote according to his own mental characteristics, literary acquirements, and personal experience and idiosyncrasies, in all various styles and in every form of literary composition, yet the Divine Spirit so penetrated the minds and filled the hearts of the writers as that all they said or wrote under this inspiration is the very Word of God, in a sense not less real than if the eternal God had uttered it in a voice of thunder from the heavens, or graven it with His own finger on the sides of the everlasting hills. This has, in effect, been the teaching of the Church; and if this is also the teaching of Scripture, the question must be held as settled by all who own the authority of God's Word.

ALL THEORIES OF INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS PRECLUDE THE
BIBLE CLAIM TO BE THE WORD OF GOD AND THE DIVINE
RULE OF FAITH AND LIFE.

All who deny this by asserting or implying its indefinite erroneousness and untrustworthiness disown its Divine authority and assert its untruthfulness. For if the Bible claims in the name of God to speak the truth, and if it, as alleged, is erroneous or unreliable, then manifestly its root claim is false. It cannot therefore be inspired by God. It is not a Divine Revelation. It cannot be the Word of God or possess any Divine authority. It must be the untruthful word of incredible men making a false claim. It cannot be the product of Divine inspiration; for every idea of inspiration would be violated by the supposition that men writing under the power of the Holy Ghost should make a false claim. It cannot be a Divine Revelation; for it is blasphemous to suppose that the God of truth would reveal as true what on this supposition He must have known to be false,

especially when that Revelation lies at the foundation of all the other revelations. The Bible cannot be the Word of God ; for God's Word must be true, and could not claim to be so unless it were so. It cannot possess any Divine authority ; for that could not be given to a false claim,—especially if this claim is made the ground of its Divine authority in all its other teaching. It is not merely the word of man, but of men stating what is untrue ; not only stating what is contrary to truth, but making a claim that is wholly false ; not merely making a false claim, but giving that as the foundation on which they base the authoritativeness of all their teaching. Consequently, since on this supposition this fundamental claim is false, and since all the other teaching is based on this, we cannot therefore trust their teaching on anything, or regard it as possessing any intrinsic independent authority, and we cannot receive their testimony as credible.

For whether this claim was false by design or by mistake, the result in either case would be the same. If this false claim was made by design, then the Scripture writers would be destitute of that honesty which is the prime condition of credibility. If by error, then they would be wanting in that intelligence which is a second essential element of credible testimony. Thus, if they have advanced this claim, if this is made their first and fundamental claim,—the claim upon which all the other claims are based,—a disproof of this is destructive of the reliability of their independent testimony in anything, and a denial of this is inconsistent with a belief of their intrinsic credibility. For it is absurdity and self-contradiction to pretend to receive them as credible men, giving a credible testimony, while at the same time we reject their fundamental claim, and thereby assert that all based thereon is false or destitute of independent credibility.

AUTHORITIES STATING THE QUESTION. DR. HODGE,
DR. R. S. CANDLISH, DR. WESTCOTT.

In confirmation of the fact that this is the real state of the question, I shall here quote the testimony of some of the most eminent authorities on the subject. Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton, says : “ If the sacred writers assert that they are the

organs of God, that what they taught He taught through them, that they spake so that what they said the Holy Spirit said; then, if we believe their Divine mission, we must believe what they teach as to the nature of the influence under which they spoke and wrote.”¹ Dr. Robert S. Candlish, Principal of New College, Edinburgh, and one of the acutest minds and profoundest original thinkers of the century, says: “It was admitted that whatever it can be fairly proved the Bible claimed to be, in respect of its Inspiration, that, it was admitted, it must be allowed and believed to be; that the whole force of its own Divine authority and of the Divine attestations on which it leans are transferred to that volume; and whatever it tells us concerning itself we now implicitly receive as true.”² Dr. Westcott, Bishop of Durham, one of the greatest N.T. scholars of the century, and the greatest living N.T. scholar, after giving the proof that the Scriptures claim to be the Word of God of Divine origin, truth, and authority, says: “From these passages it will be seen that we must either accept the doctrine of a plenary inspiration, as we have explained it, or deny the veracity of the evangelists. If our Lord’s words are accurately recorded, or if even their general tenor is expressed in *one* of the Gospels, the Bible is indeed the Word of God in the fullest spiritual sense, for no scheme of accommodation can be accepted when it tends to lead men astray as to the sources of Divine help.”³ That what he means by plenary inspiration is at least equivalent to our highest ideas of it, is shown by his definition or description of it: “It preserves absolute truthfulness with perfect humanity. The *letter* becomes as perfect as the spirit; and it may very well seem that the image of the incarnation is reflected in the Christian Scriptures, which, as I believe, exhibit the human and the Divine in the highest form and in the most perfect union.”⁴ That the Scriptures do claim and possess this I now proceed to prove. In doing so I fully realise that the force of the conclusions drawn from it depends entirely on the strength of the proof of this fundamental position. On the other hand, the opponents thereof have manifestly no other possible way of avoiding or

¹ Dr. Hodge’s *Systematic Theology*, vol. i. p. 166.

² Dr. Candlish’s *Reason and Revelation*, pp. 12, 13.

³ Bishop Westcott’s *Introduction to the Gospels*, p. 410.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 16.

evading these conclusions except by overthrowing, invalidating, and destroying the proof. That is, they require to show that the proof adduced is not proof, and that the Scriptures do not make this claim, and that the evidence for it does not amount even to probability; for in this, as in other things, the great Butler has established that probability is and must be the guide of life. To the law and to the testimony, then, if they or we speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them or us (Isa. 8²⁰).¹

¹ The teaching of the Christian Church is well given in the opening chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the latest and the best Confession of the Reformed Churches; and even Dean Stanley pronounced its Article on Holy Scripture the best and most nearly perfect article of faith that was ever written,—of which let the following suffice, as an expression of the faith of the Christian Church from the beginning: “Under the name of Holy Scripture or the Word of God written are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments:—All which are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

“The authority of Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or Church, but wholly upon God, (Who is truth itself,) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

“We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the Holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man’s salvation, the many other incomparable excellences, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and Divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.”

BOOK IV.

THE BIBLE CLAIM AND PROOF. THE TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.



CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

HERE we have to consider, *first*, whether the Bible does make this claim for itself; and *second*, what is the relation of this claim to all its other claims. In doing so, it will appear that the Bible does claim thorough truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, and Divine origin and authority. On this, too, it bases its claim on the faith and obedience of men in all its other teaching. Consequently, if this claim is denied or disowned, because untenable, the Divine authority and supernatural origin of Scripture must be abandoned, its veracity is destroyed, and its teaching on all matters deprived of any intrinsic or independent authority. Before proceeding to show that it makes this claim, it is of some importance to consider how we should expect such a claim to be made.

I. HOW SUCH A CLAIM WOULD BE MADE.

We should not expect many express declarations and emphatic assertions of its Divine authorship and authority. When the position and the circumstances of the Scripture writers are considered, the truth and reasonableness of this remark will become manifest. The acknowledged writers of the books of Scripture

were generally well-known ambassadors of God—prophets of Jehovah, or apostles of Christ, whose Divine inspiration and authority to teach in the name of the Lord were universally acknowledged; and whose messages and position, as Divinely-commissioned teachers, were accredited by miracles, or verified by fulfilments of predictions, or attested by the testimony of the Spirit in the consciousness of the Church. What Israelite, for example, would have thought of questioning the Divine mission of Moses, or the Divine authority of his writings, after witnessing the miracles in Egypt; or the Divine manifestations at Sinai, where they saw him evidently invested with authority from God and Divinely commissioned as mediator between Jehovah and Israel, going up, amid such awful scenes, before their eyes to hold communion face to face with God, and coming forth with his countenance radiant by the Divine glory, carrying in his hands the tables of the law, written by the finger of God; and writing all that was shown him on the mount in a book, at the express direction and by the Divine inspiration of Jehovah. Or what Christian would have dreamt of denying the Apostolic commission of Peter, John, James, or Paul, or the Divine authority of their teaching, whether by word or writing, after the Day of Pentecost, and the miracles, services, fruits of their labours, and other Divine attestations by which these were accredited. It was only when these were in any case questioned, through the perverting influence of evil men creeping into any Church unawares, that they felt called upon to give emphatic assertions thereof,—as Paul to the Corinthians. This is stated here, not because it is felt that there is any lack either of explicitness or fulness of proof, but because the justness of the observation lies in the very nature of the case; and the recognition of it at the outset will enable us to anticipate more truly the kind and amount of the evidence to be looked for, and to appreciate the more fully the proofs adduced, since these are so much beyond what, on the proper apprehension of the circumstances, we should expect.

2. THE CO-ORDINATE AUTHORITY OF THE N.T. WITH THE O.T.

Another preliminary remark is, that in adducing proof we proceed at present on the assumption, admitted by those with

whom we are specially dealing, of the coequality or co-ordinate authority of the N.T. with the Old in such matters. For no party to this controversy puts the N.T. on a lower level than the Old on this or any doctrinal question; but many, on the contrary, reason that whatever infallibility and authority the O.T. may have, that at least *à fortiori* must the N.T. possess. On the other hand, no person who has carefully studied and weighed the manner in which our Lord and His apostles quote from and refer to the O.T. in the New could fail to be impressed with the unique position, absolute inviolability, and Divine authority ascribed to the O.T. And the organic unity of the Bible proves it to be really one Divine, God-breathed Book.

We content ourselves at present with stating this, and with noting simply one but decisive passage, teaching in the clearest manner this coequality and co-ordinate authority as the word of the Lord of the O. and N.T., 2 Pet. 3¹⁶: "As Paul also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also *the other scriptures*, unto their own destruction." This passage is usually adduced to prove the equality of the N.T. with the Old; because at least Paul's Epistles are here placed in that position, and consequently all the rest virtually. But the passage is equally applicable and decisive to prove, to all who admit the Divine authority of Peter's explicit statement, the equality or co-ordinate authority as God's word of the O.T. with the New. By cognate and co-ordinate authority I mean that they both equally speak in the name of the Lord; though in some respects the later, because the fuller, higher, and final revelation of the N.T. has, of course, a unique and in some respects the decisive place. Yet it is not such as to deprive the O.T. of its Divine authority, or to lessen its weight as the word of the Lord. Both are equally God's Word. Especially it is of the O.T. as the word of the Lord, and of its truth, inviolability, and Divine authority, that the N.T. mostly speaks,—above all our Lord Himself, who so speaks of it and uses it as to give it virtually a second time Divine authority in the N.T.

3. THE DIVINE ORIGIN AND CREDIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE IS ASSUMED HERE. THE CANON NOT DISCUSSED.

The question of the canonicity of certain books of Scripture is not discussed here, as it does not affect the doctrine of Inspiration taught in the books whose canonicity is unquestioned by the main parties to this controversy, and because it has been ably discussed by various writers on its own merits, and proper evidence.¹ No claim for Scripture will be advanced here that is not with equal plainness taught in books the canonicity of which is admitted. Quotations will, therefore, be made from all parts of Scripture without reserve, these connected questions being, for the present at least, deferred.

In proceeding to proof, the general veracity, as also the supernatural origin and Divine authority of Scripture in general are assumed; for it is only the views of those who admit and maintain these that are at present under examination. All who uphold them are, therefore, by the necessities of their own position, precluded from using or admitting the validity of any argument against Scripture which, if logically carried out, would tend to deny, discredit, or question them. That would be simply assailing or invalidating their own position, which is the last thing those should do who profess to have constructed their own theory, and to have rejected the true view in order the better to defend these, and to make the defence of them impregnable. And yet the kinds of arguments commonly urged by them or held to be valid against the Bible claim are just those that are equally valid, if they have any validity at all, against the Divine authority, supernatural origin, and general veracity of Scripture. These, however, we assume, as they manifestly ought to be assumed by all the parties at this stage; and the thorough belief and honest application of them throughout will go far to settle the questions in dispute.

4. THE EVIDENCE AND ARGUMENT CUMULATIVE.

It should also be observed and remembered that the argument is cumulative. Therefore, it is only when all the lines and

¹ Professor Ryle for O.T., Bishop Westcott for N.T., Gaussen and others for both.

items of the evidence are considered together that the massive force and full weight of the proof is realised. Some are more impressed by one kind of evidence, and others by another ; but those who resist the whole would seem beyond conviction on anything affecting their favourite theories. They would have difficulty in producing a similar amount and quality of proof for any doctrine of the Bible.

5. THE FIRST AND CHIEF PLACE IS DULY GIVEN TO PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE EXPRESSLY TREATING OF THE QUESTION.

This place should, of course, be assigned to the general and explicit statements on the question. We give these the first place, because, according to the recognised principles of all proper Scripture interpretation, the supreme position in teaching of truth, or the decision of controversy, should always belong to those passages that expressly and didactically treat of the subject under consideration. So just and unquestionable has this principle been held to be, that with most sound theologians one clear and explicit passage,—especially if in harmony with the analogy of faith—the general system of Divine truth,—has been regarded as sufficient to teach a doctrine or decide a controversy. Those passages professedly dealing with the subject have always been recognised as entitled to greater weight than isolated statements, indirect texts, or inferences from phenomena. We state this now, not because there is any deficiency of these in this case—the very reverse is true. Indeed, one of the most conclusive parts of the proof is taken from the remarkable and superabundant phenomena which require us to maintain the truth and Divine authority of all Scripture, and which are irreconcilable with any other view.

But we state this principle here because this is the proper order of proof, and indicates the relative weight due to the various kinds of evidence. The statement and recognition of this at the outset is also the answer by anticipation to the vicious methods of certain modern critics in handling the question, who ignore or make light of the direct, positive proof supplied by the texts and passages that fairly interpreted teach our doctrine, by parading and pressing certain seemingly conflicting phenomena in the face of clear Scripture teaching. As if *their inferences* from

such phenomena were of equal, or superior weight in the determination of a doctrinal question to the passages didactically, professedly, and explicitly treating of it. As if difficulties connected with these phenomena should be regarded as decisive evidence against the positive, direct, and explicit teaching of Scripture on the subject. Why, were such a principle to be admitted, there is no Bible doctrine against which some plausible presumption might not be raised by our inferences from phenomena. Nor is there any truth in almost any sphere of knowledge, which might not plausibly be objected to if difficulties supposed to arise from other things, were to be held as valid and decisive evidence against positive proof. Now for the proof.

NOTE.—A few years before the discovery of the planet Neptune, when astronomers were unable to explain the aberrations in Uranus, the French astronomer Le Verrier laid down this principle for science: "It does not become a scientific man to give up a principle because of difficulties that could not be explained. We cannot explain the aberrations of Uranus now; but we may be sure that the Newtonian system will prove to be right sooner or later. Something may be discovered one day which will prove that these aberrations may be accounted for, and yet the Newtonian system, for which we have otherwise superabundant evidence, remain true and unshaken." Soon after Neptune was discovered, which explained the aberrations of Uranus, and confirmed Newton's doctrine. So we should act as to Bible difficulties.

NOTE.—Principal Cunningham, ably laying down the principles and the character of the proper proof of the Bible claim, says that the opponents of it "do not profess to produce any declaration of Scripture which directly or by implication denies it; and their only arguments consist of certain reasonings or inferences of their own, based partly upon some general features which attach to the Scriptures, and partly upon certain notions they have devised of what is necessary, fitting, and expedient. . . . But they do not stand upon the same footing as passages of Scripture which seem to teach different and opposite doctrine, they come merely under the head of difficulties. . . . They are mere difficulties, and are neither refutations of the positive proofs, nor proofs of a negative, upon the great general question. It is utterly inconsistent with the principles recognised and acted upon in regard to every other branch of knowledge that mere difficulties should prevent the submission of the understanding to proof which cannot be overturned, even though it only preponderated over that which could."—*Lectures*, pp. 363, 307, 308.

CHAPTER II.

THE LOCUS CLASSICUS ON THE QUESTION.

HERE we adduce first what has been truly called the *locus classicus* or great, leading, and decisive passage upon the subject, 2 Tim. 3¹⁵⁻¹⁷—specially v.¹⁶, of which the Greek is *πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν*, etc. This passage is well entitled to the important position usually assigned to it in the determination of this question. *First*. Because it treats directly and professedly of the subject; as is manifest on the very face of it. Amidst abounding evil and ungodliness Paul exhorts Timothy to abide steadfast in the things in which he has been instructed, and of which he has been assured—first, because he has learned them from Paul himself, as an inspired teacher; and, secondly, because that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures (*τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα*), “which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.”

In v.¹⁶ the reason of this is given in an explicit and direct statement, setting forth the origin, character, object, and use of these Scriptures. “All Scripture (every Scripture, *πᾶσα γραφὴ*) is given by inspiration of God,” or “is ‘God-breathed’”; and is, therefore, “able to make wise unto salvation,” and “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Here not only are the uses of the Scripture based upon, and explained by their being inspired of God; but there is a distinct and explicit declaration of their supernatural origin and Divine character, “All Scripture is God-breathed.” This is the main and fundamental statement of the whole passage, which, as such, gives the reason and ground of the other statements. It thus, when professedly dealing with the subject, explicitly declares both the Divine origin and the Divine character of the Scriptures. And it does so in the most unquestion-

able and matter of course way, as a thing well known, and acknowledged—about which there was and could not be any question.

I. THE SPECIAL WEIGHT DUE TO THIS PASSAGE.

This direct and unmistakable declaration is brought in naturally and incidentally, and as a matter of course, in urging Timothy to steadfastness amid prevailing corruption and apostasy. So that this statement has all the authority and decisiveness of a clear and direct passage, treating professedly of the subject, along with all the peculiar weight due to an explicit declaration, brought in incidentally as an undoubted postulate in this natural, unhesitating, and matter of course manner.

A *second* thing that gives great weight and importance to the passage is that its evidence for the supernatural origin, plenary inspiration, and Divine character of Scripture is not affected by any variety of reading, or difference of rendering. There is a various reading found in only one MS. and a few ancient versions, in which the *καί* of the *textus receptus* is omitted. But not only is the overwhelming weight of MSS. authority in favour of the received text retaining the *καί* and decisive against its exclusion, on the acknowledged principles of Textual Criticism ; but even the adoption of this various reading, although it would alter the rendering slightly, would not affect the general sense of the passage, nor lessen the weight of its testimony, when taken along with the context, in support of the Divine truth, trustworthiness, and authority of all Scripture.

This will appear fully when we consider the various renderings of the *textus receptus*. Three different renderings have been given.

First. The rendering of the Authorised Version, "All Scripture (or every Scripture) is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" ; and with this agree the great majority of translators and the alternative rendering in the Revised Version, "Every Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable," etc.

Second. "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable." This is the received rendering of the Revised Version, and of most of the opponents of plenary inspiration, and of some of its upholders.

Third. "Every Scripture being inspired of God, is also profitable," etc. As a question of translation it is obvious that the difference of meaning is not very material; especially when taken in connection with the context, which defines what the Scriptures immediately referred to are, namely, the τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα of v.¹⁵—the Scriptures so well known to Timothy, and to all by that familiar name. The difference between the last and the first is simply that the Divine inspiration of Scripture is in the one case assumed, θεόπνευστος being taken as an attribute of the subject, while, in the other case, it is expressly asserted, θεόπνευστος being regarded as part of the predicate along with ὠφέλιμος, the substantive verb being in the one case understood after θεόπνευστος and in the other before it. The καί in the one introduces the principal and only direct assertion—the predicate proper (ὠφέλιμος); the καί in the other simply connects the two parts of the predicate θεόπνευστος and ὠφέλιμος as co-ordinate predications.

2. ANY OF THE TRANSLATIONS TEACHES THE SAME DIVINE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

Now, whichever of these translations is preferable, it is manifest that they teach the Divine inspiration of all Scripture,—the first by express declaration, the others by postulated assumption. The πᾶσα γραφή according to the teaching of both parties, by the uniform use of the expression, and by the context, especially the τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα, is appropriated to Holy Scripture.

The second rendering gives a somewhat different meaning. It makes the predicate the same as the third rendering; but in the subject it does not, like the first and third, either expressly or implicitly assert that all or every Scripture *is* inspired of God. It only asserts that every Scripture that is inspired is also useful—simply declares that the usefulness of Scripture is coextensive with its Divine inspiration, leaving it to be determined otherwise what Scripture is inspired. But inasmuch as the recognised use of πᾶσα γραφή and the context settle that the Scriptures directly referred to were the Scriptures well known to Timothy from childhood, and to all as the sacred writings,—as those adopting this translation with whom we are now dealing admit and maintain,—the evidence afforded by this passage for the Divine

inspiration with the consequent doctrinal and practical usefulness of all these Scriptures, without distinction of parts or particles, jot or tittle, is still clearly taught, and indisputably set forth.

That the rendering of the Authorised Version, and of the great majority of the ablest critics, is the true and most natural, we, after considering all that is advanced for the others, are thoroughly convinced. The other translations making the “also” or “even,” with the substantive verb understood immediately before it, are, to say the least, awkward and harsh, as Ellicott and Alford admit ; and it renders the *καί* useless or redundant ; for the meaning is the same without it as with it on this rendering. It is also unnatural and forced, contrary to usage, and attended with considerable difficulties,—the natural and obvious construction being to supply the substantive verb with *θεόπνευστος* as a predicate, coupled with *ὠφέλιμος* the other predicate—as Bishop Middleton in his work on the Greek article says.

But what seems most decisive of all against this, and in favour of the received rendering, is that the latter declares positively that all Scripture is inspired by God, and profitable, therefore, for doctrine, etc. ; and thus gives a reason why it was able to make wise unto salvation. But the former conveys little or no information, makes the apostle assert what to Timothy would be a truism, and deprives the words of that fulness of meaning and aptitude of use so apparent in the other. Who does not feel that to tell Timothy, accustomed from his youth to receive the Holy Scriptures with such reverence, and to look upon all that Jehovah did as of supreme importance, that every Scripture inspired of God is useful—would be a trite and insignificant statement, of little use to Timothy, and not fitted to secure the object of Paul. Thus the original text, the grammatical construction, and the natural meaning are opposed to this, and support the received translation. And since no good reason has been shown for departing from it, but much to the contrary, it is manifestly better to abide by it.

But while we prefer the received rendering, the vital thing to observe is that on *any* of the proposed translations the evidence furnished by this passage for the Divine inspiration of all regarded as Scripture is clear and decisive, and is the same in effect in all, whichever is adopted. The received rendering teaches it directly, and by express declaration in the very words of the passage itself

(v.¹⁶). The others teach it indirectly by necessary implication, or indisputable reference from the text taken along with the context. And it is specially important to note that this Divine inspiration is on any of these translations taught of *all* Scripture, or of every Scripture. Whatever this passage teaches as to inspiration, it teaches of all Scripture, and of all equally. It makes no distinction between books, or various portions of books, or different contents of books.

3. IT TEACHES THE DIVINE ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY OF ALL SCRIPTURE.

It does not restrict the inspiration, Divine origin, or Divine authority to some kinds of things, or to certain classes of truths or facts to the exclusion of others, but extends it equally to all. It knows absolutely nothing of limitation or qualification in the matter; but explicitly asserts the universality of Scripture's Divine inspiration—God-breathedness, and consequent profitableness. It predicates this of Scripture as a whole—of the Bible as a book, without distinction of books or contents, parts or particles, jots or tittles. It declares in the most direct and explicit manner that the written documents composing the Bible, with all the things contained therein and all the parts thereof, are inspired of God. Many writers holding different views on inspiration prefer to render *πᾶσα γραφή*, “every writing”; and these lay stress upon this as furnishing the strongest testimony to the Divine inspiration of “each and every one of the writings” comprised under the well-known title *τὰ ἱερὰ γράμματα*, the apostle declaring distributively the inspiration of all the writings to which he had previously referred collectively. Certainly this rendering, which is in itself unquestionably correct, does emphasise the inspiration, the Divine inspiration, of every one of the sacred writings, of all parts and contents thereof. And surely it ought to be conclusive proof to all who adopt it, and specially to those who press it, of the Divine inspiration not only of every book of Scripture, but of every passage as written therein; for it is manifestly absurd and self-contradictory to maintain the inspiration of the books, while denying or questioning the inspiration of the passages forming them. These constitute and are the books; and if the books are inspired, as is admitted and

maintained, then the Bible passages composing them must be inspired also. It is they that are declared to be God-breathed and embody the revelation. Yet, strange to say, this is what some who contend for the rendering hesitate to affirm, and others deny. They do so because, from their other views and theories, they fail to carry out consistently and honestly their own interpretation of this emphatic and decisive passage. What makes this all the more wonderful and unreasonable is that the interpretation of "every writing" as equivalent to every book is by no means obvious or necessary either from the words themselves, the context, or the usage of Scripture. On the contrary, good authority can be produced, both from Scripture itself and the writings of the early Fathers, for interpreting *πᾶσα γραφή*, "every passage of Scripture."¹ Now, while it might be pushed beyond what these and similar examples might warrant to insist on this as absolutely the only and necessary meaning, yet these are sufficient to prove it admissible, while it also seems not unnatural. They should also make it both natural and acceptable to those who insist on "every writing"; for it only carries out that rendering literally and in detail. Certainly they cannot, in the face of these examples and of their own rendering, seriously object to this without contradicting and stultifying themselves.

It thus appears that whether *πᾶσα γραφή* is translated "all Scripture" or "every Scripture," the effect and meaning are the same—"all Scripture" predicating Divine inspiration of the Bible as a whole—"every Scripture" the Divine inspiration of each book, passage, and part thereof; and, therefore, necessarily of the book as a whole. For if it is absurd and self-contradictory to predicate the inspiration of the Bible as a whole, while denying or questioning the inspiration of any of its parts, it is, if possible, more manifestly so to assert the inspiration of every book and passage thereof, and yet to refuse or hesitate to attribute Divine inspiration to the whole book. If whatever is predicated of the whole book is predicable of the parts, *à fortiori* whatever is predicable of each part of the book must be predicable of the whole. Thus the very distributive rendering, which the opponents of plenary inspiration insist upon, is the most fatal to their own rationalistic and anti-scriptural limitations and distinctions. The very rendering that they prefer and urge ascribes Divine

¹ See Carson on Inspiration for quotations.

inspiration to every part and passage of Scripture ; and, therefore, of necessity precludes any limitation of that inspiration, and forbids any distinction between various parts of Scripture as to the fact of their inspiration. If *every* Scripture is inspired of God, obviously there cannot be any Scripture that is not inspired ; for to say that *every* Scripture is inspired, and to say that this or that or the other Scripture is not inspired, is a self-evident and logical contradiction. It would be so with the “all” instead of the “every Scripture,” but the “every” makes the contradiction more direct and pointed. And this holds whether *θεόπνευστος* be taken as predicate or subject, and whether the Scripture said to be inspired is determined by the text itself, the context, or both ; for, as shown above, the Scriptures are in any case the well-known sacred writings.

Thus on every interpretation of this passage the Divine inspiration of all and every part of Scripture is taught ; and, however the various parts of Scripture may differ in other respects, there is and should be, according to all interpretations of this passage, absolutely no difference as to their being all alike inspired—God-breathed.

4. NO HINT GIVEN OF DEGREES OF INSPIRATION, BUT IMPLICITLY PRECLUDED.

Nor is there a single hint or suggestion here about kinds or degrees of inspiration. On the contrary, the very generality of the language, and the absoluteness of the statement that all or every Scripture is inspired of God, seem manifestly and purposely to exclude every such idea. It declares without any limitation, qualification, or hesitation that all or every Scripture—that the Scriptures as a whole—is inspired of God. Therefore, there is no Scripture that is not inspired, and none more and none less than inspired of God. This gives no countenance to, and leaves no room for, the baseless idea that Divine inspiration meant one thing in some parts and another in others. But while the theory of kinds and degrees of inspiration is destitute of support from this or any explicit passage of Scripture, and is opposed to the natural teaching of this and many passages ; and while its advocates avowedly base it upon certain suppositions of their own imagination, as to what it would be necessary for

God to do in producing His word, it is nevertheless important to observe that the earlier supporters of this theory admit that every Scripture is inspired by God, and that the Divine inspiration in every case secures complete truthfulness and excludes erroneousness, as may be seen from the works of Dr. Pye Smith and Dr. Henderson on Inspiration. Thus their very least degree of inspiration secured reliability in everything written in God's word, and made erroneousness or error inconsistent with their ideas of inspiration. By this they are radically distinguished from all those who assert the erroneousness or errancy of Scripture.

By this passage, and others, these last are irresistibly driven into one or other of these untenable and anti-scriptural positions.

First, that all or every Scripture is not inspired of God,—which is a full and direct contradiction of the teaching of Scripture in this and other passages ; and is therefore a denial of the truth and independent authority of Scripture on this or any subject ; and logically requires all who hold this to abandon and deny the supernatural origin, Divine authority, and real veracity of Holy Scripture even in fundamental religious questions. Or, *second*, that the Divine inspiration of every part and passage of Scripture is quite consistent with an indefinite number of errors, misrepresentations, and false teachings, and provides no security against them,—which is a manifest contradiction of the general tenor of Scripture teaching, and is in full and direct opposition to the explicit statement of this passage, and the obvious meaning of the specific word here used to express Divine inspiration, *θεόπνευστος*. This leads to consideration of its meaning.

5. THE MEANING OF *θεόπνευστος*.

The word means literally *God-breathed*, or *Divinely-breathed*, being a compound of *Θεός*, God, *πνευστός*, breathed—the verbal adjective from *πνέω*, to breathe. It has been said that the verbal might be taken actively as well as passively, meaning “God-breathing”—denoting that the Scriptures are filled with God and breathing of Him, the Written Word manifesting God as the Incarnate Word did the Father, or, as the poet of the seasons conceives Nature is pervaded by God, and all its varying seasons but various manifestations of Him.

“These as they change, Almighty Father! these,
Are but the varied God.
The rolling year is full of Thee.”

Now while this is true of Scripture it is not the truth taught here, and is not the meaning of the word. Winer says, “That the word is to be taken in a passive sense here can admit of no doubt.”¹ It is also supported by the analogy of such compound words. It only properly suits the context. It alone truly answers the apostle’s object in making the statement. Scripture is able to make wise unto salvation, and is useful because it is God-breathed. It is God-breathing because it is God-breathed. It breathes *with* God because it was breathed *by* God. This is the etymological, literal, and accepted meaning of the word, and no other has been seriously contended for as the proper meaning here. But what precisely does this mean and imply? This may be difficult fully and definitely to determine, or adequately to express; because it brings us into that mysterious region where the Divine and the human, the infinite and the finite, the Spirit of God and the spirit of man co-operate. But these truths seem clearly and necessarily included in the very pregnant, remarkably explicit expression *God-breathed*.

6. (1) IT IMPLIES DIVINE ORIGIN.

First. That the Scriptures are of Divine origin, that they owe their existence to God’s breathing, sprang from the inspiration of God’s Spirit. That this is implied in the expression is admitted by all who recognise that *θεόπνευστος* is here predicated of the Holy Scripture either expressly or by implication.

(2) DIVINE PRODUCTION.

Second. That the Scriptures are of Divine production, and were produced by God’s breathing through human instruments, as really as man’s words are produced by him through his organs of expression; and the Scriptures are as truly the product of God’s Spirit as man’s books are his product. That the means or instruments of production are different does not alter the fact that they are equally the product of their authors. God-

¹ Winer’s *Grammar of N. T. Greek*.

breathed cannot mean less than Divinely produced. This is not an inference from the expression, it is the manifest meaning of the expression itself, and what is necessarily implied therein.

That this is implied in it is also confirmed by the use of equivalent, we might say identical, expressions in other parts of Scripture. In Ps 33⁶ it is said, "By the word of God were the heavens made, and all the host of them *by the breath of His mouth*" (τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος, Sept.; Heb. בְּרוּחַ), — this last expression being equivalent to of like import with θεόπνευστος. And as Creation is the product of God's breathing, so must Scripture be when the same or an equivalent expression is used of it. No theist questions that Creation is produced by God; and since cognate or equivalent expressions are used of Scripture, it must also be regarded as a Divine product. Indeed, if anything, the advantage in the form of the expression is with Scripture. For of Creation it is simply said that it is *by* the breath or breathing of His mouth, as the instrument or agent. Whereas of Scripture it is said to be *God-breathed*, as the effect or product. In the case of Creation this God-breathing is put forward as the *means* of *production*. In the case of Scripture God-breathed is given as the character of the product, as an attribute of the object—both the agent and the product being represented as Divine. So that if Creation is from this regarded as a Divine product, Scripture *à fortiori* must be so also. In Gen. 2⁷ it is said, "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (נִשְׁמָה, Heb.; πνόη, Sept.) of life, and man became a living soul." Here the creation of man, especially the creation of his soul, is attributed to God: so that man is wholly the creation of God. What is peculiarly important here is that the creation of man's spirit, and the communication of life to man, which constituted him a living soul, are ascribed to God's breathing—Divine inspiration. That by which he was made, or constituted a living being, was God's breathing; and that which was communicated by God in the production of man is called the breath of life. Thus man like Scripture is God-breathed,—the very thing breathed by which man was constituted—the breath of life—being in the Septuagint expressed by the noun from the verb used in the N.T. to express

the inspiration of Scripture.¹ Therefore if man, especially man's life and spiritual being, is the product of God because God-breathed, as all admit, Scripture must be so also.

Yea, the Scriptures are thus set forth more directly and expressly; inasmuch as they themselves are said to be God-breathed, while of man's body it is only said that God formed it of the dust of the ground, and of man's spirit that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and consequently man became a living soul. In the one case the *product* is declared to be God-breathed, in the other the production is said to be of God. The one emphasises the effect of being God-breathed; the other emphasises the cause as God's breathing. Similarly Job 33⁴ and 23⁴, "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath (inspiration, *πνοή*) of the Almighty hath given me life." Here the creation of man, the production of his understanding, life and being, are expressly and repeatedly ascribed to God; and that, too, in the Septuagint, by the very word used to express the Divine inspiration of Scripture—the advantage in explicitness in these cases, as in the other, still lying with Scripture. Therefore, if it is believed that man is a Divine product, so *à fortiori* it must be held that Scripture is also. This appears all the more manifest when it is remembered that *πνóη* is predicated, as has been often emphasised, not of the writers but of the writings—not of the human instruments, but of the written documents—not of the process of production, but of the resultant product—not of the state of mind of the persons employed to write, but of the character of the writings themselves.

(3) DIVINE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL SCRIPTURE.

A third idea contained in *θεόπνευστος* is Divine responsibility for all the contents of Scripture. All or every Scripture having been inspired by God, and it being all declared to be as written God-breathed, it necessarily follows that God is responsible for all that is written, even as a man is responsible for what by his breathing he utters—for all that is expressed by him. And this manifestly holds to all absolutely. Not merely to some kinds of

¹ Cf. Jos. c. *Ap.* i. 2 [αἱ γραφαὶ] τῶν προφητῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐπίπνοιαν τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ μαθόντων.

things, but to everything ; not simply to the substance of Scripture, but also to the expression ; not only to the ideas alone, but to their embodiment ; not only to the moral and religious teaching, but to the whole teaching of Scripture. For *θεόπνευστος* is predicated of the writings as a whole, of each individually, of what is written and *as* it is written. It is the writings as written documents,—the words conveying the thoughts, the expression embodying the substance,—that are said to be God-breathed. Consequently, for every part and particle, for every word and item, for every jot and tittle of it, God is responsible, as an author is for everything in his writings. Besides, as we have often shown, it is manifestly absurd to speak of the thoughts or substance as inspired but not the words or expression, because the thoughts are embodied in the words—the expression conveys the truth ; and we know nothing of the one except through the other, and as set forth by the other. Consequently, if the words or expression are not inspired, the thoughts or substance cannot be. If the one is not trustworthy, neither can the other be. But what this passage declares is that the writings—the ideas as expressed in the words—are God-breathed, and therefore necessarily true, obviously Divine,—God being responsible for every thing and expression therein.

Nor is this at all affected by the fact that He employed the instrumentality of men in producing the Scriptures ; because He Himself chose His agents,—doubtless those best fitted to write as He wished ; and these Divinely-selected men spake and wrote as they were moved—borne along (*φερόμενοι*)¹ by the Holy Ghost. So that what they said He is represented as saying ; and what they wrote under this influence is said to be God-breathed. All this surely declares that, whatever part or place man or man's agency had in the production of Scripture, the Infinite Spirit of God so operated on the finite spirit of man as to secure that the product in the written book should be in simple fact, as it is expressly called the Word of God,—as really as the word of man is his word,—for every part and particle of which God is as responsible as man is for his, because God-breathed. Human agency does not, therefore, alter or affect the three great facts necessarily implied, or included in this *θεόπνευστος*—God-breathed—which is predicated of all Scripture :—*first*, Divine origin ; *second*, Divine production ; *third*,

¹ 2 Pet. 1^{19, 20}.

Divine responsibility. This makes God the author, producer, and sponsor of every Scripture and of everything therein.

(4) DIVINE TRUTHFULNESS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.

Having shown this, it need scarcely be said that *θεόπνευστος* includes and predicates the Divine truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture, for that is practically equivalent to saying the same things in another way, or expressing in a definite form the practical result and main design of the others. Indeed the pregnant expression *θεόπνευστος* appears on the very face of it, and in its very nature necessarily to imply this. What is God-breathed must be Divine, and what is Divine must be true and trustworthy. So manifest and necessary has this been felt to be that the usual way of limiting the truth and reliability of Scripture has been to limit the inspiration, not by denying that what was inspired was true and trustworthy, but by restricting the inspiration to certain parts and things in Scripture and excluding it from others. We have already shown that Divine inspiration is predicated of all Scripture; and, therefore, these must be predicated of it also, even on the principle admitted by those who seek to limit it.

In confirmation of the felt and manifest truth of the position that all that is thus inspired is trustworthy, it is important to note that even those who first invented the figment of degrees of inspiration teach that all Scripture is truthful, because all inspired. Even their least degree of inspiration was held to secure this, so strong and universal is the conviction of the coextensiveness of Divine inspiration with truthfulness. And when this, which is evidently implied on the very face of the expression *θεόπνευστος*, is combined with the other facts also included in it,—viz. that the Scriptures were, as God-breathed, of Divine origin, and a Divine product for which He was responsible,—the Divine truthfulness and trustworthiness of all Scripture stands out with clearness and decisiveness from this prime passage in this unique expression.

(5) DIVINE AUTHORITY.

Besides infallible truth, Divine authority is implied in *θεόπνευστος*. It does surely seem obvious that what is given by

Divine inspiration and is a Divine production, for all of which God is responsible, should possess and carry Divine authority. The Divine fulness of this pregnant expression is not adequately set forth or exhausted without this idea also, so that Divine authority appears a necessary constituent element of it as well as truthfulness; for surely what God breathes and produces by His breathing and embodies by His Spirit's inspiration must not only be truth, but also carry and possess Divine authority. Besides, God's purpose in giving Scripture by inspiration was that it might convey a true, trustworthy, and authoritative revelation of His will in the form in which He wished it to be expressed. And since this was the supreme end of the Divine inspiration of the Bible, the *θεόπνευστος* must imply and include Divine authority. Therefore the expression "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," is equivalent to "All Scripture is the Word of God,—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority."

But in maintaining this it is necessary not to mistake or exaggerate what is meant by Divine authority when predicated of Holy Scripture. It is important to set forth as precisely as may be what specifically is included therein. And it is vital to a thorough defence of the true position, and a proper settlement of the question, to distinguish between what is essential and what is not, in the matter,—to discriminate between what is necessary to be maintained and what, though perhaps true or probable or admissible, is not indispensable to the complete defence of the main position. On no part of this question have the opponents of the Bible claim manifested greater confusion of thought than here. From no point of attack has greater prejudice been created among the uninstructed against the reception or even consideration of the truth, than by the misunderstanding or misrepresentation of the Divine authority claimed for Scripture. How frequently have objections to its Divine authority been raised by such confused and absurd interrogations as the following!

Were the words of Satan to Eve in Eden, or to Christ in the wilderness, inspired? Were the utterances of his friends to Job right, or the injunction of Abraham to Sarah to say she was his sister? Were the words and acts of Jacob to deceive Isaac, or the directions of David to secure the death of Uriah, authorised of God? Or were the lies of the false prophets who

opposed Jeremiah, and misled Ahab to his ruin given or approved of God? Were the blasphemies of evil men, such as Sennacherib, or the rebukes and denials of Peter, or the fabrications of the Pharisees, or the cries of the Jews against Christ, given by inspiration of God, or do they carry Divine authority? It is astounding to have such questions asked by sane and would-be superior men. Most certainly not one of these was right, and therefore not one of them or any such can be approved by God; and, consequently, not one of them possesses Divine authority in the sense of Divine sanction, as Scripture itself in the particular places, or by its pervading tone abundantly shows. But most certainly the *record* of every one of them was inspired by God. They are all in Scripture by God's authority, through His inspiration, though the actions themselves were not sanctioned but condemned by Him, and were recorded as they are in order to be condemned. They also all in some way or other reveal the Divine will, expose sin, and aid in man's salvation, else they would not be there. And so far as, and in the way in which they do so, they all carry Divine sanction; and are therefore in His Word by His authority, and are recorded there through His inspiration in the way He wished, so as best to secure His gracious purpose. They thus form an important part of His Revelation, and have all been recorded in His Word as He wished, by His authority and through His inspiration. Therefore, all the Scriptures and all such things in Scripture, are Divinely inspired; and are, therefore, truly profitable, and carry Divine authority as originally given, when properly interpreted in the sense in which God intended, and for the purpose that He contemplated. They are, therefore, "all profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

So that Divine origin, Divine truthfulness, Divine trustworthiness, and Divine authority and responsibility are all clearly and necessarily taught and predicated of all Scripture as the simple and inevitable meaning of the words with connections in this great, classical, and decisive passage and revelation of God's Word, which explicitly and professedly treats of and declares God's mind on this primary and fundamental religious question, and is the root, basis, and necessary postulate of all the other teaching, statements, and revelations of Holy Writ. This is

and should be decisive and final to all who recognise the authority of God, and of the teaching of God's Spirit speaking in God's Word, and the Divine mission of Paul, and of God's Son. For He, as seen, not only Himself ever spoke of, and used God's Word in this way, but by a special revelation of Himself called Paul to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, and specially fitted him for his Divine work by that supernatural inspiration of the Holy Ghost which He promised to give to His apostles to lead them into all truth, and to enable them to declare in speech and writing His mind and will as He wished. So that what they said or wrote in His name He said and wrote by the Spirit of their Father speaking in and through them, thus making, in the most real, strictest sense, all Scripture God's Word. This statement thus, because an express Divine utterance and revelation on this root doctrine, is and should be decisive, and a final settlement of the question. Therefore we have treated this great cardinal passage fully, and in the light of it the other proof will be the better understood and the more thoroughly appreciated though more briefly given; and in the light of the other its significance and force will be the more felt and appreciated.

NOTE.—Of this great passage Principal Cunningham says: "It was the Scripture, and not the contents or substance of it, not the truths or sentiments conveyed by it, or the facts narrated, but the Scripture that was divinely inspired; and what distinct meaning can we attach to this statement, unless we admit that the Scripture, as it stands, composed wholly of words, the words which make it up, is to be traced to the agency or operation of the Holy Spirit? . . . The natural, obvious, and unstrained meaning of the apostle's assertion then is, that the Scripture, as it has been given to men, composed wholly of words, was communicated by God, and is to be traced to Him as its author; and as it has been communicated to us through the instrumentality of men who committed it to writing, the inference seems, and unless some strong positive arguments can be adduced on the other side, is, irresistible, that He guided them in the composition of it, and was the real cause and author of what they wrote, and of what has been transmitted to us under their names. It is not an inference from this position, it is the very position itself expressed in different words."—*Lectures*, pp. 361, 362. Of course, there are other passages teaching that the Spirit gave the substance or the revelations also in the spoken as well as the written Word (2 Pet. 1^{20, 21} etc.). But what is here specifically predicated is, not of the writers, but of the writings, as written.

CHAPTER III.

THE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC SCRIPTURE PROOF.

AFTER this great, classical, standard passage, which more directly, explicitly, and completely than any other single passage treats of Scripture as a whole, and declares most clearly, fully, and professedly the Bible doctrine of Holy Scripture—the teaching of God's Word as to itself,—the teaching of our Lord Himself upon it would have now been naturally adduced in the general proof of the Bible claim. But as this has already been given in Book I. with considerable fulness, it must, to save repetition, be understood to be taken in here. And as the claim and testimony of both the apostles and prophets were there also partially introduced, the less is needed now. Further references to His teaching on it will be made chiefly at the close, to give His Divine support and seal to the claim made for Scripture by the prophets of the O.T. and the apostles of the N.T.; so that our faith may be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone,” that in all things, and specially in this fundamental truth, He may have the pre-eminence; so that our faith and hope may stand, not on the wisdom of man but on the wisdom and the Word of God.

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT CLAIM.

In summarising and completing the general proof of the Bible claim, the O.T. claim and proof naturally come first. As, however, these are best shown from the N.T. standpoint, and have been given largely before, in our Lord's teaching and otherwise, let the following summary outline suffice. The O.T. writers and writings claim that the Bible is the Word of God,—

true, trustworthy, and of Divine origin and authority. They preface their messages with the specific and significant "Thus saith the Lord," and its equivalents, which proclaims on its face that it is not their own but God's words they utter,—the form as well as the substance, being declared to be God's by the "*Thus* saith the Lord." The O.T. books and writers speak in the name of the Lord; and all are pervaded by a tone of Divine authority, breathe with an air of eternity, and speak to the soul with a voice of God that make such a profound impression of the Divine presence, as no other book approaches to, and leave on earnest minds an abiding conviction that God is its author.

PERENNIAL PHRASES: "THUS SAITH THE LORD,"
AND EQUIVALENTS.

The frequent phrases, "the word of the Lord came to," "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," "the hand of the Lord was upon me," "Hear the word of the Lord," and the like, with which the prophets open and close their writings, and frequently their separate prophecies, are the most decisive conceivable ways in which they could express and emphasise the truth that what they spoke and wrote in His name, at His command, and by His inspiration, were not their words but His; and they seem to be purposely put so frequently and so variously to preclude the possibility of any other idea. To show the truth and Divine persistency of God's words given through the prophets, God said to Jeremiah (36²⁷), "Take thee again another roll, and *write in it all the former words that were in the first roll*, which Jehoiakim hath burned."

To emphasise the fact stated by Peter that prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but "holy men of God spake as they were moved (*φερόμενοι*, borne along as a ship before the wind) by the Holy Ghost (1 Pet. 1²⁰), the prophets often refer to the Divine pressure under which they were irresistibly constrained to utter their prophecies; as, for example, Am. 3⁷, "the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"; Jer. 20^{8, 9}, "His words were in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I could not stay." "The Lord hath spoken, who can but hear?" So Paul, "Woe's me if I preach not the

Gospel," 1 Cor. 9¹⁶. So Christ, "Immediately the spirit driveth—(impelleth) Him (as by a mighty constraining impulse), into the wilderness" to be tempted of the devil; where by the words of Scripture, the sword of the Spirit, He vanquished Satan.

The testimony comes both from the side of the prophets and of their God. Jeremiah says (30⁴), "These are the words which the Lord spake concerning Israel and Judah." Isaiah, in his opening words giving "the vision that he saw," exclaims, afire with Divine inspiration, "Hear, O heavens, for the Lord hath spoken." Ezekiel says, "The word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel" (1³). The Lord handing him a roll, said, "Eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel with My words" (Ezek. 3¹⁻⁴), these teaching by most expressive figure that the teaching both written and spoken was God's and man's—God-given, man assimilated and expressed. David says, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me" (2 Sam. 23^{2, 3}). A most expressive and decisive passage this; in which these "last words of David"—three times said to be his words in v.¹ are in v.² twice said to be what "the Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in (upon, R.V.) my tongue"—a most vivid and express way of identifying David's words with the Spirit's words; and in v.³ they are twice said to be what God said. So the other O.T. writers often speak. And they all, as above, present their words as Divine utterances, and attribute them to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as Jeremiah, "The Spirit of the Lord fell on me, and said to me"; just as the N.T. writers represent what the O.T. says as "What the Holy Ghost said";—even when in the O.T. the words are given as the human author's, and *vice versa*,¹—the names of the Divine and the human authors being frequently interchanged, because they co-operate and are identified in the expression of God's Word.

As the inspired writers give the testimony from the human side, so God gives it from the Divine side. To Moses the Lord said, "I shall be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Ex. 4¹²). To Jeremiah, "The Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and said unto me, Behold I have put My words in thy mouth" (Jer. 1⁹). "Behold, I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood" (Jer. 5¹⁴). To Isaiah

¹ See below.

He says, "My words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever" (Isa. 59²¹). Stating the general rule of Divine procedure in Revelation, God says, "If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord will speak to him" (Num. 12⁶). And of the prophets as a whole, God says, "I have also spoken by the prophets" (Hos. 12¹⁰);—just as in Heb. 1¹, "God, who in times past spoke unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son";—God as truly and to the same effect speaking through them as by Him.

The command to write and preserve sacredly in order to keep inviolable the words of God for the instruction of all Israel, and the frequent solemn charges given to the leaders and kings, rulers and judges, priests and people, to read, teach, and meditate on them, for the prosperity and salvation of themselves and their children, show how Divinely true, sacred, and authoritative were all the words that God had given through His inspired servants. To Moses the Lord gave a most solemn charge, "Write thou these words,"—a command oft repeated as the successive portions were given, and as Revelation entered on a new, higher, more important and permanent stage (Ex. 34²⁷). When the king ascended the throne, "he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests" (Deut. 17¹⁸). To Joshua the Lord said at his entrance on leadership, "This book shall not depart out of thy mouth . . . for then shalt thou make thy way prosperous" (Josh. 1⁸). So at the close of his life "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God," thus adding a new portion to the portion of God's Word already written. So Samuel "told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. 10²⁵). And so on, more or less, through all the prophets and O.T. writers. To Isaiah the Lord said, "Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever" (Isa. 30⁸, Hab. 2²). To Jeremiah, "Take thee a roll and write therein all the words that I have spoken to thee" (Jer. 36¹ 30²). Jeremiah said to Baruch, "Go thou, and read in the roll which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the Lord, in the ears of the people" (Jer. 36⁶),—the written words of Jeremiah being the words of the Lord, because the prophet is the mouth

of the Lord. And to show that the written word of God is the same in character with the spoken word, though assimilated by man, and becomes thus both the Word of God and of man, Ezekiel is caused "to eat this roll that I give thee," and to go "speak with My words" to Israel. By these books Daniel seems to have learned the approaching end of the Captivity (Dan. 9²). Accordingly Zechariah at the close of O.T. prophecy says, "The words which the Lord of Hosts sent by the former prophets" (Zech. 7¹²); by which the books and words of all the prophets are, as it were, resealed, and declared to be the Word of the Lord. So that the Divine and the human testimony are one in this.

THE DIVINE DEFINITION OF A PROPHET.

Perhaps the most explicit, comprehensive, and decisive proof that the prophets' words are God's words, is God's definition of a prophet. As has been often urged, the prevalent conception of prophets or cognate agents, even in heathenism, was that they were the organs of the god, and were in fact so possessed by the god that their own consciousness and individuality were supposed to be suppressed or suspended in the divine phrenzy that gave birth to the oracles.¹ And although this latter idea is precluded from the prophets of the Lord, and is a significant contrast to their vivified mental state and spiritual exaltation in prophesying, in which all their faculties were in full and highest spiritual exercise, yet the main root-idea is the same in both,—that the fruits of Divine inspiration are the oracles of the God, and that the words of the utterances are the words of the God. Certainly at least the prophets of Israel are the organs of God, and their God-given words are "the oracles of God." Most clearly and unquestionably has God declared this in His definition, as given to Moses, "And thou shalt speak unto Aaron, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall say. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and we

¹ The Greeks designated these *θεοφόροι* (those who bore the God within them); and *ἐνθεοί* (those in whom the God dwelt). In the Septuagint the word *πνευματοφόροι* is used in this sense. See Dr. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, p. 158.

shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of, God" (Ex. 4^{15, 16}). "And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a God unto Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet" (Ex. 7¹). It is impossible to conceive of words more explicit and decisive than these to prove the Divine origin, truth, and authority of the O.T.,—or at least of all written by prophets—which is the great bulk of it; for Moses, David, and other writers of Scripture were prophets, and psalmists were often prophets, and uttered glorious, far-reaching prophecies. In short, prophets were the organs or mouthpieces of God, and they wrote the Scriptures.

And what is said of all written by the prophets is true equally of the Law and the other O.T. writings. For Christ Himself tells us that "all the Law and the Prophets (the familiar title for the whole O.T.) *prophesied* until John" (Matt. 11¹³), as they certainly did, for they all prefigured or testified of Him (John 5³⁹); so that according to Christ the whole O.T. was God's Word. Besides the Law, the other great division of the O.T., was not only given by Moses, who was a prophet, the first and the greatest of the prophets, the type of the Divine prophet (Deut. 34¹⁰ 18¹⁸), but it held a primary and fundamental place in Revelation as the root and foundation of both O.T. and New. It ever held a unique place, and pre-eminently and specifically expressed the will of God. Besides, it was largely given directly by God Himself, and was specially ordered to be written,—the fundamental part of it—the ten commandments—being written by God's own finger. It was also guarded with special sacredness, and the most awful curse was threatened on all that dared to add to, or take from, or alter it in any part or point (Deut. 4. 12³²). And Christ, as we have seen, declared that heaven and earth would pass away ere one jot or one tittle of it should pass away, or fail, till all should be fulfilled (Matt. 5¹⁸).

Further still, large parts of the O.T., as of the New, are given as the words actually spoken by the Lord Himself, very much larger portions than are usually thought, as may be seen by going over the Bible with this view. Nor is there a single hint in Scripture to suggest that the other parts are not of equal truth and authority; as indeed there could not be without contradiction of other and the fundamental parts of God's very

words,—which would be self-contradiction, and would necessarily discredit and destroy all.

THE PROPHETS DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR
PROPHECIES.

If anything could give additional confirmation of the Bible claim to be the Word of God,—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority,—it is supplied by the fact stated in O.T. and New that the writers of Scripture often did not understand the meaning or full scope of what they said or wrote by God's direction and inspiration. Peter expressly states the recognised fact, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you : searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1^{10, 11}). This clearly declares that there was much in what the prophets said and wrote that they did not understand ; and, therefore, they had to inquire and search diligently to try to ascertain the meaning and scope of their own words :—than which there could be nothing more decisive as to the necessity of supernatural inspiration, and of Divine guidance even in the very words and figures used. The fact from which this cogent truth follows is well established and illustrated, among others, by the case of Daniel in the O.T. and Peter in the N.T. In the last chapter of Daniel (12⁷) the time of the predicted events is dimly indicated, "It shall be for a time, times, and a half." On this the prophet says, "And I heard, but I understood not" ; and when he asked the date, the Lord answered, "Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." This shows that he did not fully understand his own prophecy, and that God had purposely concealed part of its meaning ; and that the prophets "searched diligently" to penetrate the mysteries of their own prophecies. And Peter, before he was able to apprehend the full meaning and scope of the words uttered by Him through the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, namely, "The promise is unto you and to your children, *and to all that are afar off*," etc., had to receive a fresh revelation from God (Acts 11) before he realised the full Divine intent of his own

Spirit-given words,—even the mystery that had been hid for ages, and was only at last revealed to the apostles,—“That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ” (Eph. 3⁶). So that supernatural inspiration was thus an absolute necessity in both substance and words, if they were truly to reveal God’s gracious purposes; which, again, in a most conclusive way shows that Scripture is supremely the Word of God, and the prophets the organs of God.

WICKED MEN UTTERED PROPHECIES.

More decisive still, if possible, is the fact that even bad men were used by God at times to give great and glorious revelations. The prophecies of Balaam in the O.T. and Caiaphas in the New well illustrate this, and prove in a unique way that a prophet’s words were God’s words. Balaam uttered several of the grandest prophecies of the Messiah, which were gloriously fulfilled in Christ and the history of Israel. He expressly calls¹ the Lord his “God”; and says, “he heard the words of God,” “and saw the vision of the Almighty”; that the Lord repeatedly met him, spoke to him, “put a word in his mouth,” and charged him twice, “Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak.” Twice he says, “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more; and I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord to do either good or bad of mine own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak.” And in all he seven times insists and declares that he was to utter only God’s words, and felt himself under an imperative necessity, amounting to a mental impossibility, not to do anything else, even though he wished to say what Balak desired, in order that he might get his reward. Such is the law of prophecy for Jehovah, even in the case of wicked Balaam, “who reaped the wages of unrighteousness.” A Divine pressure was laid upon him which he could not resist, even when he would; and which held him fast in God’s hand, and constrained him to say nothing but what the Lord said to him, and put in his mouth. So that he was in literal fact the mouthpiece of God, and was even against his will three times constrained to bless instead of to curse Israel.

¹ Num. 22-24.

Similarly Caiaphas, the wicked high priest, whose garments are for ever crimsoned with the crime of betraying and murdering the Lord of glory, prophesied in his official capacity as high priest "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John 11⁵⁰ 18¹⁴). The evangelist gives the principle ruling in all prophecy when he adds, "This spake he not of himself, but being high priest that year he prophesied"; and thus was by the Spirit constrained to utter prophetically the great truth of our redemption by vicarious sacrifice. Nothing could prove more decisively than these that prophets were the organs of God, and uttered truly His words; and that, therefore, the O.T., which, as we have seen, Christ said had all a prophetic character (Matt. 11¹³, John 5³⁹), was, and of necessity must be, the Word of God. For those are said to utter these great prophecies, the full meaning and issue of which they did not comprehend, and they would not have uttered them save under a Divine pressure and constraint that they could not resist: and which, from the very nature of the case, required Divine inspiration of the very words of their prophecies. Even of the perfect and Divine Prophet promised by God through Moses the Lord says, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and *will put my words in His mouth*"; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him" (Deut. 18¹⁸); as we know, He Himself claimed, when He came, to speak the words given Him by the Father, and that "the words which ye hear are not Mine, but the Father's that sent Me" (John 14²⁴ 8²⁶). And this speaking of the God-given words, of the Divine Prophet, is true of all the prophets, and was the essential function of every prophet speaking in the name of the Lord.

THE CHARACTER AND QUALITIES ATTRIBUTED TO SCRIPTURE.

The character and qualities, too, attributed to the Bible imply and presuppose that it is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. It is said to be "true," "perfect," "sure" and "steadfast," "pure" and "holy," "right" and "faithful," "good" and "enduring for ever," "quick and powerful," "sharper than any two-edged sword," "a hammer," "a fire," etc.;—all of which are ascribed to the Written Word; and connote and postulate

the trueness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture. And when to this is added the Divine, saving effects of this Word of the Lord in enlightening the mind, convicting the conscience, converting the soul, making wise the simple, breaking, healing, rejoicing the heart, renewing and ruling the will, quickening and inspiring the spirit, purifying and transforming the whole man, and elevating and ennobling the whole life (Ps. 19, etc.) ;—which have been verified in the history of the race, and been so potent in the experience of the Church,—we have the strongest experimental proof of its Divine origin, truth, and authority. Hence the Psalmist well says, “Thy word is true from the beginning” (Ps. 119¹⁶⁹), or with equal force and greater completeness, as in R.V., “The sum of Thy Word is truth,”—just as our Lord says, “Thy Word is truth” (John 17¹⁷). So in Daniel the same Lord says, “I will show thee that which is noted (R.V. inscribed) in the Scripture of truth” (Dan. 10²¹). Appropriately crowning and including the whole, Isaiah appeals to God’s Word as the supreme and authoritative standard of faith and life, in the weighty and decisive words, “To the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, there is no truth in them” (Isa. 8²⁰). Surely what God makes the standard of truth and duty must itself be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority,—the Word of God. And crowning all, the Psalmist says, “Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name” (Ps. 138²).

This then is the testimony of all the prophets, and the claim made by the O.T. for itself. A testimony that it is impossible to deny is theirs in the light of even the very summary outline given above. A claim that is unquestionably made ; and which is confirmed :—First, by the remarkable fulfilment of their prophecies ; second, by the beneficent moral and spiritual effects of the Scriptures in the history of men and nations creating a new world ; third, by the manifest and indissoluble relationship between their prophetic and symbolical religion and the facts and truths of the religion of Christ,—demonstrating a Divine pre-adjustment of the type to the antitype,—of the prophecy to the history of Christ and His Church—a Divine Revelation of Grace. And this, as seen, is the testimony and claim that the Lord Himself endorsed in His teaching, embodied in Himself, and realised in His Redemption.

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT CLAIM AND TESTIMONY.

It now remains only to complete the apostolic proof, and close with Christ's Divine Sealing of all. We shall do so by giving the apostles' teaching separately, and then comparing and combining them; from which it will strikingly appear that they all bear one testimony, and teach one doctrine of Holy Scripture, though from different standpoints, in various ways, and in diverse connections—even that the Bible is the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority:—the same doctrine as is taught by the O.T. and endorsed by Christ.

I. THE TEACHING OF PAUL AND HIS WRITINGS.

We take Paul's teaching first, as the fullest, and the completion of what he has given in his great *locus classicus* above; and his writings form the great bulk of the N.T. As that was his last testimony, 1 Thess. 2¹³ is his first; and as they both teach the same doctrine, and as all between them accords with these, it appears that from first to last, though in a great diversity of ways, he ever teaches one identical doctrine of Scripture: "When ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2¹³). This refers directly to the word spoken; but it necessarily holds equally and *à fortiori*, as seen, of the Word Written; for besides the fact that the spoken word became the Written Word, it is a patent absurdity to imagine that the word spoken should be called the Word of God, while denying this to the Word Written;—especially when so much is ever made in Scripture of what is written compared with what is merely spoken. Whatever is predicated of the spoken word is, of course, predicable *à fortiori* of the word when written. And all attempts thus to evade the force of this, or any such passages, is obvious captiousness, lacking intellectual fairness, disclosing a bigoted prejudice against the truth, and exhibiting an unenviable capacity of shutting the eyes to fact and reason, ill befitting those who vaunt supreme regard for truth, fact, and candour. This is, however, a vain device with Paul. For he writes in 1 Cor. 14³⁷, "The things that *I write* unto you *are the commandments of the*

Lord." And in 2 Thess. 2¹⁵ he writes, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast in the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, *or our Epistle*,"—thus giving at least an equal truth and authority to his written as to his spoken words. Hence in 1 Thess. 5²⁷ and Col. 4¹⁶ he gives charge that his Epistles be read in the Churches. In 2 Cor. 13³ he says, "Being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not spare; since ye seek a proof of *Christ speaking in me*, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you." Here he claims that Christ speaks in him; that when he speaks for Christ, it is Christ that speaks through Him; and this claim is to be proved by the works of judgment which by Christ's power he will, if need be, perform on persistent transgressors. So in 2 Thess. 4²⁻⁸ he writes, "Ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit";—just like Christ's words (Luke 10¹⁶). Hence in 2 Thess. 3¹⁴ he says, "If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him":—evidently because he was disobeying what was a Divine message.

There is thus no getting away from the Divine truth and authority of Paul and his writings. "All Scripture" he, by the Spirit, declares to be God's Word (*θεόπνευστος*); his own words, whether written or spoken, are "in truth the Word of God," and "the commandments of the Lord,"—"Christ speaking in and through him." This claim is proved by the miracles of mercy and of judgment God wrought by him in attestation of his Divine mission and teaching; and by the no less miraculous moral and spiritual effects of the effectual working of his (because God's) words in the hearts, characters, and lives of men, through the power of the Spirit's sealing.

*The Oracles of God. Great Truths proved by single Words.
The Words of the Spirit.*

Like Stephen, too, he calls the Scriptures "the oracles of God";—a most expressive and significant title, which, according to both Jewish and Gentile usage and idea meant that they were the utterances of God,—the human agents through whom they

were given being simply the organs of the Divine communications. And lest it should be supposed that, contrary to all Hebrew and heathen meaning of oracles, this meant merely some vague sort of general spiritual influence exerted on the minds of the human agents by which a certain Divine element was imparted to their writings, which readers must find for themselves amid the mass of other things, by some peculiar spiritual intuition and some mysterious process of personal elimination—as so many moderns evaporate Divine inspiration by—he expressly attributes both the substance and the expression, the words as well as the thought, to the Holy Spirit. Speaking of “the things that are freely given to us of God”—“the things of the Spirit given to him by revelation”—he says, “Which things we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; combining spiritual words with spiritual things” (1 Cor. 2^{12, 13}):¹—the things revealed and the words by which they are expressed and embodied being equally ascribed to the Spirit. Just as in Acts and Hebrews we read “what the Holy saith”; and in Rev. 2. 3 our Lord says His words are “what the Spirit saith.” This leaves us free, and bound to use all means to find out as correctly as may be what they were, and to ascertain precisely what they mean, by the aid of the same Spirit that inspired them, enabling us to know and understand them. But it does not leave us free—nay, it forbids us—to alter them, or correct them or to select some and reject others, or to force our own interpretations upon them;—and it is at our peril if we dare to do so in a single iota (Rev. 22^{18, 19}, Gal. 1⁸).

So clear and decisive is Paul on this that, like our Lord proving a great truth (His own Divinity) by a single word of Scripture, because of its absolute inviolability (John 10³⁵), he proves the Messiahship of Christ by the difference between the singular and the plural forms of one word:—“He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3¹⁶). This specific application of these words to Christ, as well as the fact that this was designed by God in the use of the singular instead of the plural, “seed,” and not “seeds,” was, doubtless, unknown to the O.T. writer; and, therefore, Divine inspiration must have secured the selection of the specific form of the word, which is the point and basis of

¹ πνευματικοῖς πνευματικά συγκρίνοντες.—Alford, Fawcett, etc.

Paul's reasoning ; and only of what was God's Word could Paul make such use or have such confidence. Hence he says of the Gospel of which he was writing, to them "If any man preach any other gospel than that ye have received ('my gospel'), let him be accursed" (Gal. 1^{8. 9}):—words which could not have been used save of the Word of God. So he says, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1¹²). In Eph. 3³⁻⁶ he claims that Christ made known to him the mystery, not made known before, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, "as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit"; where again revelation and Scripture are God-given by the Spirit through His inspired organs.

As he attributes his own writings to the Holy Spirit, so he does the O.T.: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah" (Acts 28²⁵); and teaches that his own gospel is the same as in the O.T.,—"the Scriptures of the prophets" (Rom. 1² 16^{25, 26}, Eph. 2²⁰); and thereby teaches the unity of all Scripture. Like Christ he declares that the whole Law is summed up in one word, "Thou shalt love," etc. (Gal. 5¹⁴); and thus, with Christ, proclaims its divinity and perpetuity—love being eternal and Divine—"God *is* love." He also was in the habit (Acts 17^{2, 3} 18²⁸) of proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ; and thus taught the truth and Divine authority of Scripture; and showed that to him, as to Christ, Scripture was the rule of faith and judge of controversies. In Rom. 15⁴, as in 2 Tim. 3¹⁶, he proclaims the perennial fruitfulness and perpetuity of the O.T.: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Further, he puts the N.T. on a level as God's Word with the O.T.: "For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the labourer is worthy of his hire" (1 Tim. 5¹⁸),—putting a text from Luke (10⁷) on a level as Scripture with one from Deut. (25⁴). Hence he says that the Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. 2²⁰). Here he teaches, *first*, that the teaching of the prophets and apostles, and of their Lord, is one and the same,—confuting many modern errors; *second*, that the O. and N.T. are the Divine standard of faith

and life, and that, therefore, they must be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority.

He also enlarges upon the powers and effects of the Word of God. It is "the word of truth" (Eph. 1¹³, 2 Tim. 2¹⁵), of life (Phil. 2¹⁶), of salvation (Acts 13²⁶); the "faithful Word" (Tit. 1⁹), which "worketh effectually" in believers (1 Thess. 2¹³), and "bringeth forth fruit" (Col. 1^{5.6}); and by which men are quickened and renewed, justified and sanctified, purified and perfected, strengthened and comforted, guided and succoured, illuminated and transformed, and grow and develop into the statues of perfect men in Christ;—all which powers and effects prove its truth and Divine authority.

The Word of God the Sword of the Spirit.

And he calls it the Sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6¹⁷); a figure which implies sharpness and trueness, reliability and solidarity, irrefragableness and inviolability; and which requires, as its very idea, to be free of flaw and blemish, and of everything that would mar its point, or impair its edge; and to possess everything that would make it a sharp, keen, piercing, and unyielding weapon in the Spirit's hand;—even as in Hebrews "the word of God is said to be quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intent of the heart." These penetrative words and striking figure utterly preclude every theory of indefinite erroneousness, and demand as their essential idea the trueness and trustworthiness, irrefragableness and Divine authority of Holy Writ with the utmost sharpness and precision.

Paul, like Christ, identifies Scripture and God.

Yea, so absolute is Paul on this that, like Christ, the Scripture is by him personalised and identified with God. "The Scripture saith unto Pharaoh" (Rom. 9¹⁷), while in Genesis it is the Lord that actually utters the words. So also in Rom. 4³ 10¹¹ with Isa. 28¹⁶. And in Gal. 3⁸ he says, "The Scripture foreseeing." Thus personal powers and actions are ascribed to Scripture; because God and His Word are identified. Human

language could not surpass this in expressing the fact that the Bible is the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. In short, from the above, and much more that might be adduced, it is evident that to Paul all Scripture was what it was to Christ—the Word of God : and to almost every form and means by which our Lord has expressed this, a parallel might be found in this chief of the apostles ; because in both cases it was God's message they delivered by the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit. Both often quote from it simply as Scripture, without any name of human writer, because to both it is Divine. To both all Scripture is the Word of God, its words are God's words, "what the Spirit saith." "It is written" or "fulfilled" is final to them in all questions. "Have ye not read?" "Wot ye not what the Scripture saith?" is their decisive rebuke to every captious questioner, and the end to all controversy. They both found great truths on single words and the forms of words ; and even dim and distant hints are made the germs and bases of vital revelations. God and the writers of Scripture are often interchanged in utterances recorded ; and the Scripture and God are identified in what is said. What Paul writes are "the commandments of the Lord," just as what Christ says are the Father's words and commandments. As the Father speaks in and through Christ, so Christ speaks in and by Paul ; and in both it is the Spirit of the Father speaking in them. Sometimes they speak of all Scripture as God's Word ; sometimes of particular parts or words of it ; but in all cases what is said in any case is applicable to all. As Christ often says that the messages He delivers, He received of the Father ; so Paul says that it is what he received of Christ he delivered unto men, and that the Gospel he preached was received not of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. As Jesus threatened judgment on any who would dare to alter the words of Scripture, so Paul denounced a curse on any who would dare to preach any other Gospel. As Christ urged His disciples to continue in His words, so Paul charged Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me" (2 Tim. 1¹³), and calls them "wholesome words, even the words of the Lord Jesus," and condemns any that "think otherwise" (1 Tim. 6³). As Christ charged the Pharisees with perverting and destroying the Word of God by their traditions, so Paul warned all against "handling it deceit-

fully" or daring to "corrupt" it. They attribute similar qualities and powers to the Word, and both personalise it and personally live by it. As Christ appeals to His miracles in proof of the truth and Divine authority of His message, and the Divine origin and authority of His mission, so does Paul (2 Cor. 12¹²); and, like Christ, he showed that the death and resurrection of Christ were the fulfilment of Scripture (1 Cor. 15^{3, 4}, Acts 13²⁹). In these and many other parallel things, the Divine Master and the greatest of His apostles treated and regarded Scripture in precisely the same way, because inspired by the same Spirit; and by explicit and implicit teaching, as well as by habitual attitude and manner of using, showed that to them the Bible was beyond question the Divine rule of faith and life, because the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority.¹

2. THE TEACHING OF PETER AND HIS EPISTLES. THE HOLY GHOST THE SUPREME AUTHOR OF SCRIPTURE.

As with Paul so with Peter, in 2 Pet. 1^{20, 21} he, by the Spirit, lays down the law and first principle of prophetic interpretation, origination, and inspiration, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but (holy) men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (R.V.). This is Peter's, as it might be called the prophetic *locus classicus*. It teaches first, that every prophecy is of Divine, not of human, origination: for although ἐπιλύσις (solution) does not directly mean origin, it implies disclosure, and therefore origination by God. Hence, second, it is said, "No prophecy ever came by the will of man," or as Alford puts it, "springs not out of human interpretation" or prognostication. The words of the prophecies were not merely the words of the prophets' own choosing, but God's words; hence they did not sometimes understand the meaning, or the full meaning, of their own prophecies, but, like others, had to search diligently to find that out (1 Pet. 1¹¹), and were dependent upon the illumination of the Spirit for it. The interpretation of prophecy, and of Scripture generally, therefore,

¹ To show that the same doctrine is taught more or less in *each* of his Epistles, to the above add:—Col. 1^{5, 10, 23, 26} 3¹⁶ 4¹⁶, Phil. 1^{14, 27} 2¹⁶ 4⁹, Tit. 1^{1, 3, 9, 13} 2^{1, 15} 3⁸, Philem. 6.

is, like the origination, not of the private human powers, either of the writers or the readers, but by the illumination of the Spirit. As Gerhard well says, "The Author of Scripture is its supreme interpreter." All this is made more emphatic by the order of the clauses in the Greek, "Not by the will of man," opening the first clause, and "but by the Holy Ghost" the second, making the contrast most striking. Hence, third, and this is the crucial clause, "But (holy) men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost," there the well-known prophetic phrase "Thus saith the Lord" finds its echo and equivalent in "spake from God." And how this is done is most forcibly and significantly expressed by "being moved (*φερόμενος*) by the Holy Ghost"; where the Greek is most expressive, signifying "borne along" as a ship by a mighty wind; the same Greek as Acts 2² "a rushing mighty wind,"—in which they were rapt and carried, as it were, out of themselves,—passive in the Spirit's power, and yet intensely conscious, and fully responsive to the Spirit's inspiration, and their whole powers and sensibilities raised to the highest state of mental and spiritual exaltation. So that, like the apostles at Pentecost, when they gave their prophecies "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake as the Spirit gave them utterance"; and what they said and wrote was, therefore, "what the Holy Ghost said"—the Word of God. With this agrees 2 Pet. 3^{1, 2}, "This second Epistle I now write unto you—: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord." Here again the words of the writers of the O. and N.T. are shown to be the words of the Spirit; and the words spoken and written by the prophets and apostles are put on a level in truth and authority as the word of the Lord, and the rule of faith and life.

Similarly in 2 Pet. 3^{15, 16}, "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: as also in all his Epistles; in which are some things hard to be understood, which . . . the unstable wrest, *as they do also the other Scriptures.*" Here what is said of the Scripture generally above, is said specifically of Paul's Epistles—they are put on a level with the O.T. Scriptures. Besides that they form a large part of the N.T., this by implication places the other N.T. writings on a level with the O.T.; for whatever plane

or category they are placed in, the other inspired writings can claim.

Showing the necessity of the words being the Spirit-given words, he says in 1 Pet. 1^{10, 11}, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently: searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." For surely nothing could more clearly show the absolute necessity of the words being inspired than the fact here stated, that the prophets did not sometimes understand the meaning or scope of their own prophecies, and, therefore, had to inquire and search for it; and consequently had the Spirit not given them or guided them in the language, it was patently impossible for them to have expressed truly his mind and message in the prophecies. This is strongly confirmed by the text before quoted, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance" (ἀποφθέγγεσθαι, *dabat eloqui*, Vulgate) (Acts 2⁴). Not only do the closing words declare as clearly as can be that their utterances were Spirit-given (Πνεῦμα ἐδίδου), but that they were given because they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and, therefore, were also able even "to speak with other tongues." Surely their speaking, on the Spirit's descent, in tongues they never knew, demonstrates the imperative necessity of the very words being given them by the Spirit; and proves that their messages were Divine, and their words God's words. Accordingly, we find that all Peter's utterances at that time are expressly attributed to his being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4⁸). And Peter, by the Spirit, explains all these amazing phenomena at Pentecost as the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit given by God through the prophets, and by Christ (Acts 2^{16, 18, 33}). He also specifically ascribes prophesying to the Spirit, "I will pour out of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2¹⁸). He uses, too, the O.T. figure and phraseology, representing the prophets as the spokesmen of God "which He hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3²¹). He also declares the Divine authority of the prophets' messages by reference to the supreme Prophet, foretold by Moses, the *type* of all the prophets, "Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you" (Acts 3²²). And led

by him and John, the assembled believers "lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art *God, who by the mouth of Thy servant David* hast said" (Acts 4²⁵); just as David in his last words said, "The God of Israel spake by me, His word was in my tongue" (2 Sam. 23²).

The Power and spiritual Effects of the Word.

Like Paul, too, Peter speaks of the power and saving effects of God's Word, "Seeing ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth—; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth, and abideth for ever—: the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1 Pet. 1²²⁻²⁵). Here, he teaches that the Word of God is living, quickening, and regenerating; purifying too, because it is the "word of truth"; abiding also and enduring for ever like Him whose Word it is. And, like Christ, he teaches that "the seed (of the Kingdom) is the Word of God" (Luke 8¹¹); and that seed not corruptible but incorruptible;—not partly truth and partly error (which the very figure precludes), as many now say, but pure, and therefore purifying,—living, and therefore life-giving,—true, and therefore enduring for ever. So that here we have taught the truth and purity, the vitality and power, the perpetuity and divinity of God's Word. Like Paul and Christ and all the N.T. writers, Peter also quotes the O.T. as "fulfilled," "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas" (Acts 1¹⁶). The prophet is here again the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost; and only what was true could be fulfilled; only what was Divine and of Divine authority could the Holy Ghost speak.

And, finally, Peter refers to the Divine sealing, origin, and authority of their mission and teaching, by the miraculous works done through them by the Spirit, in attestation of the truth of their Divine claims saying, "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said—ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 11¹⁶). Just as John says, "When He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered how He had said this unto them; and they believed the Scriptures and the Word which Jesus had said" (John 2^{17, 22} 11¹⁶). A

charmingly simple and suggestive revelation of how the apostles were led by the Spirit, as Christ promised, to remember His words and to understand the Scriptures; and showing the necessity of the events that fulfilled His words concurring with the Spirit's illumination to enable them to understand the words both of Scripture and of Christ. Hence Peter said before the Jewish council, witnessing for the resurrection, "We are the witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him" (Acts 5³²). The Holy Ghost, as Jesus promised (John 15²⁶⁻²⁷), witnessing, first, by the miracle of tongues and prophecy; second, by the miracles of healing; and third, by the not less but even more decisive miracles in the moral and spiritual world, of the revolutionised and divinified character and lives of men and nations as they receive and obey the Gospel.

3. THE TEACHING OF JOHN AND HIS WRITINGS. CHRIST'S WORDS THE APOSTLE'S WORDS.

As with Paul and Peter so with John. But as we have given his most important words on Scripture largely already in the teaching of Jesus and otherwise, the less is needed here. It should be noted, however, that all that is given from John and the other Gospels as Jesus' teaching is also the teaching of the Gospel writers. It expresses their mind as well as His; for they wrote it, *as* they have done, because they believed it and wished to teach it. Therefore, the unity that pervades Christ's teaching, though gathered from all the writers of the Gospels, proves, first the unity and harmony of all the evangelists and their Gospels;—they have one doctrine—one Gospel—though their books are four, and their standpoints different, and their writings diverse,—their teaching and their testimony are one. Second, it shows that Christ and His apostles and evangelists who write the Gospels are one in faith, and hope, and charity. They are not only in harmony with each other, but also with their Lord,—a patent, significant, and potent fact; for it refutes many prevalent errors, proves the inspiration of the one common Holy Spirit in all, and shows that the real Supreme Teacher in and through all that Jesus and His inspired servants taught by lip and pen, was God the Holy Ghost; for there is no other such rational explanation

of the unique fact as this which Scripture gives. Third, it is a hard and decisive fact, which scepticism and rationalism must face, and cannot be reasonably accounted for except upon the supposition of a supernatural revelation and inspiration,—a proof of the Divine origin, truth, and authority of the Bible and its religion.

The Sharpness and Decisiveness of John's Words.

It should also be said that John's teaching on Scripture is, perhaps, the clearest, sharpest, strongest, and most decisive in God's Word. The larger part of all his writings, specially in his Gospel and the Apocalypse, are given as the actual words of Christ;—than which how could he more decisively show that the Bible is the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority?—and especially when in these parts there are, as shown above, the most unquestionable declarations and implications by Christ to that effect. It would be difficult, if possible, to get any utterance or fact more sharp and decisive than "the Scripture cannot be broken," not even in a single word (John 10³⁵); or more direct and unquestionable than "Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth" (17¹⁷),—especially when joined with the words earlier in the same last great prayer, "For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me" (John 17⁸ 14¹⁰). No words could be more absolute and awful than "these are the true sayings of God" (Rev. 19⁹); "these words are faithful and true" (Rev. 22⁶); and "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, that if any man shall add to these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life," etc. (Rev. 22^{18, 19});—words which, as shown, apply to all Scripture, and are its solemn close and Divine seal by the words of incarnate God. Could anything be more satisfying and convincing in explanation of this than the varied and explicit promises of the Spirit of their Father to lead them into all truth, etc., and to speak in and through them, given by Christ to His disciples adduced above? (John 14²⁶ 15^{26, 27} 16¹²⁻¹⁴, Matt. 10²⁰, Mark 13¹¹);—promises which became facts and potencies from Pentecost onward in all they spoke and wrote for Him.

What the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

Hence the whole revelations of the Apocalypse are prefaced and explained by "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day"; and large parts of what forms it are by Christ expressly declared to be, "What the Spirit saith unto the Churches" (Rev. 2. 3, etc.). Could anything be more explicit or decisive as to the truth and Divine authority of Scripture than that what they wrote and spoke is said to be "what the Spirit saith." All this is strengthened by the facts emphasised in this connection that the Spirit is expressly called "the Spirit of Truth"; and that He and the apostles are put on a level in testifying of Christ, "I will send unto you from the Father the Spirit of Truth,—He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness" (John 15^{26, 27}). It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth (1 John 5⁶). The Spirit bearing witness by the gift of prophecy and of tongues to the apostles, to enable them to bear true testimony, by the miracles of healing wrought in attestation of their Divine mission and message, and by the supernatural moral and spiritual effects of their words upon the souls, characters, and lives of men the world over. And the apostles bearing witness by the words of truth and power they spoke and wrote, through the inspiration of the Spirit, of what they knew and had revealed to them about Christ. Hence as Christ said of Himself, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John 3²⁴), so the apostles could say; for they were as truly sent by Christ as Christ was sent by the Father (John 20²¹); and they were as thoroughly equipped, by the same Spirit of the Father speaking in them and through them (Matt. 10²⁰), for their work as apostles as He, the Apostle of our profession, was for His,—the same Holy Spirit as truly inspiring both (Luke 4¹⁸). Therefore, as Christ said, "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth God's words" (John 8⁴⁷), so John wrote, "He that knoweth God heareth us" (1 John 4⁶); even as Christ said before Pilate, "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John 18³⁷). And as Christ said, "Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 7⁴⁷), so John writes, "He that is not of God heareth not us" (1 John 4⁶). Accordingly, John sums it all in the round statement, "Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error," making Scripture the standard of faith and life.

Further, in 1 John 2²⁰ and 5¹⁰ he speaks of the believer having "an unction from the Holy One," and "a witness in himself," by which, through the testimony of the Spirit, he knows, verifies, and tests all things. Hence John says that he "bare record of the Word of God" (Rev. 1²); and in the first close of his Gospel, "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20³¹); and in the final close of his Gospel, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his *testimony is true*" (John 21²⁴). And of one part of it he says, "And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe" (John 19³⁵, 3 John¹²). Here, like Christ and all the other apostles, he brings in two remarkable examples of Scripture fulfilment, "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken" (John 19³⁶ with Ex. 12⁴⁶, Num. 9¹², Ps. 34²⁰),—three Scriptures being thus fulfilled by one true event truly recorded. And again another Scripture saith, "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced" (John 19³⁷ with Zech. 12¹⁰ and Ps. 22^{16, 17}), where two other Scriptures are fulfilled by the same event. So that the one recorded event fulfils five Scriptures, contained in four different books, in the three familiar divisions of the O.T., the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Consequently because the apostle's writings are God's Word, "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John 5¹⁰). Surely never was language more varied, or utterances more awful, or connections more conclusive, than these to show the truth and Divine authority of the Word of God.

In further and final confirmation he sets forth the blessed effects and consequences of God's Word, and of believing it, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy; and keep those things which are written therein" (Rev. 1³); "Because thou hast kept My Word, I also will keep thee" (Rev. 3^{8, 10}); "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1 John 2^{4, 5}); "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life" (Rev. 22¹⁴).

These words not only reiterate the truth and Divine authority of Scripture, but teach that it produces such effects, and brings such blessings as only God's Word could secure,—blessedness *in* and *for* the keeping of His Word. Thus all the leading lines and elements of proof of the Bible claim, and our main position and doctrine of Scripture are found in John, as in Peter, and Paul, and their Lord. And their teachings and writings cover, and include almost the whole N.T. For Christ's teaching covers directly the Gospels and the Acts, and indirectly all the rest by His promises to the apostles, and by His utterances and solemn endorsement at the close. Further, Mark's Gospel was written, according to well authenticated tradition from apostolic times, under the eye of Peter, of which the book itself gives evidence. Similarly Luke's Gospel and the Acts were under Paul's eye, while Peter and Paul's words largely compose the Acts and cover it all. So that we have practically the whole N.T. teaching the one same doctrine in every conceivable way, with awful and ineluctable absoluteness, and making the claim, with an amazing unanimity, reiteration, and emphasis, that the Bible is in the truest, most real sense the Word of God, and the rule of faith and life—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority.

4. THE TEACHING OF JAMES AND HIS EPISTLE.

And even the smaller books not *directly* included under these apostles' testimony bear their own testimony to the same effect, and blend their tones with the unanimous voice and grand harmony of the apostolic chorus.

James in his short Epistle has several distinct and suggestive utterances confirming this Bible claim. "Of his own will begat He us with (He brought us forth by, R.V.) the Word of truth" (1¹⁸), teaching both the truth and the regenerative power of the Word of God. In 1²¹ he says, "Receive with meekness the ingrafted (implanted, inborn, R.V.) (ἐμφυτον) Word, which is able to save your souls"; which refers to the inward vivifying and transforming effect of God's Word ingrafted by the Holy Spirit in the believing heart, so as to be incorporated in him in its living and life-giving power, as the living fruitful shoot is with the wild natural stock in which it is ingrafted, and by which its life is saved to bring forth good fruit;—provided the recipient is not

a mere hearer but a doer of the Word, who looketh into the perfect law of liberty (as into a glass) and continueth therein (1²²⁻²⁵). As in 1²⁵ he calls God's Word "the perfect law of liberty," teaching its authority and perfection, righteousness and freedom; and as in 2¹² he says, "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty," making it the standard and judge of faith and life;—so in 2⁸ he says, "If indeed ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well." Here he teaches that the supreme law in Scripture is love. It is called the royal law, since it is the sum and essence of all the law and of all Scripture, and because God the King is love, and His law and Word are, like Himself, love; and, therefore as the royal law—the law of God Himself—the law of love, like God, rules supreme and eternal. Accordingly, as in this, he teaches the supremacy, perpetuity, and Divine origin of the law, and of Scripture, of which it is the first and fundamental part,—the basis and root of all; in 2¹⁰ he declares its solidarity and inviolability, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend (stumble, R.V.) (*πταίῃ*) in one point, he is (become) guilty of all." It is a most important and significant statement, the same idea as our Lord has expressed so sharply and majestically of the whole O.T. in John 10³⁵, Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁹—the oneness and solidarity, and consequent inviolability of God's Word; so that to break it in one part or point is to break the whole. As one discordant note spoils the harmony, or one small rent in a seamless robe rends it, or the tiniest fragment of a vase broken makes it a broken vase, so the breaking of one point in the law is the breaking of the whole, and makes it a broken law, and the breaker becomes a transgressor. In this case respect of persons was the particular breach of the law of love as expressed in one text of Scripture (Lev. 19¹⁸); but the breaking of it in that point was the breaking of the whole law and Scripture of which it formed a part. Nothing could more sharply and strongly teach the solidarity and inviolability of God's Word than this. James also, like the rest, says, "Scripture was fulfilled" (2²³, Acts 15¹⁵⁻¹⁸) with all the proof of the Bible claim in that, as shown before. Also what the Council at Jerusalem on James' motion resolved to write to the Gentile Churches is said to be "what seemed good to *the Holy Ghost*, and to us" (Acts 15²⁸). In 4⁵ Scripture is, by James,

like the others, personalised, and held as the rule of faith and conduct, "Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain?"

5. THE TEACHING OF JUDE.

Jude similarly writes, "While I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (v.³ R.V.). "Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles ;—how they said to you, In the last times there shall be mockers," etc. (vv.^{17, 18}), referring evidently to 2 Pet. 2¹ 3³ and 2 Tim. 3¹⁻⁹ 4³. Here we find, first, that Jude, as an inspired apostle, with all the Divine authority that belongs to him as such, is carefully writing to them of the common salvation. Second, that while he is doing so, he is constrained by the Holy Spirit to urge them to contend earnestly for the faith delivered once for all to the saints. Third, that it was delivered *once for all* in the Scriptures, in what had been spoken and written by the apostles ;—the "once for all" applying specially to what was *written*, for that only could remain for all saints ; just as Peter writes to put them "in remembrance," to "remember the words spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the Lord through the apostles" (2 Pet. 3^{1, 2}) ;—where what was written was what was specially meant. So that Jude also makes Scripture the rule of faith and life, giving it Divine authority and finality. He also makes it the means to holiness, "Building yourselves up in your most holy faith" (v.²⁰). And, further, he says, "Enoch prophesied of these ungodly sinners" and mockers,—and thus implies all the evidence for the Bible claim involved in prophecy and its fulfilment. So that here again we have the same leading elements of proof for our doctrine and position.

6. THE TEACHING OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

The Epistle to the Hebrews might be regarded as included in the Epistles of Paul ; especially as its Pauline authorship has been the prevalent view almost since it was written until now ; and at least Origen's statement that the thoughts were Paul's has much to say for it, which would warrant its being held Pauline,

if not literally Paul's. But as this has been and is disputed, I have not used it in my statement of Paul's teaching,—though references have been made to it. As it has some peculiar and most decisive contributions to the Bible claim, we note a few of them now.

God and the Holy Ghost the Speakers in Scripture.

Its opening words form a very explicit and suggestive statement that the Bible is the Word of God. "God who by divers portions and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" (1¹. 2). Here we have, first, that God was the speaker in the O.T., and that the prophets were His organs; second, that He spake by diverse portions and in diverse manners—a progressive and complementary written revelation, given by divers but complementary portions, at different times, in various ways, through successive ages; so that they together form a many-sided, many-voiced, but harmonious revelation, in which each book and writer supplied His part by the Holy Spirit in the one God-given revelation. Third, that it is the same God who, through the same Spirit, spake unto us the same message by His Son, in the fulness of time, so that it is *God* who speaks in and through all Scripture; and therefore it must be all true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority.

With peculiar frequency and emphasis, therefore, we find the Holy Ghost represented as the speaker, when often in the O.T. the speaker is the human writer.¹ Indeed the Divine and the human authorship is often interchanged, and used indiscriminately, for the obvious reason that they are held to be one—the human being the organs or agents of the supreme Divine author. Sometimes it is the human writer that in the O.T. is expressing the statement which in Hebrews is attributed to God,² sometimes to the Holy Ghost.³ Sometimes what the Lord says in the O.T. the Holy Ghost says in Hebrews.⁴ All showing that the Holy Ghost is the Supreme

¹ See Heb. 2⁷, Ps. 95⁷, Heb. 10¹⁴, Jer. 31³¹⁻³⁴, Heb. 4⁷, etc.

² Heb. 1⁷, Ps. 104⁴ 1⁸ 45⁶. 7 1¹⁰ 102²⁵ 4¹, Gen. 2² 4⁷, Ps. 95⁷.

³ Heb. 3⁷, Ps. 95⁷ 9⁸, Ex. 30¹⁰, Lev. 16.

⁴ Heb. 10¹⁵, Jer. 31³³, 34.

and real Author of Scripture ; that God is the Speaker throughout,—the human writers being His agents inspired by His Spirit ; and that, therefore, the Bible is in the truest sense the Word of God. Hence, too, the three divisions of Scripture are quoted from indiscriminately, and all as of equal truth and Divine authority with unquestionable confidence. The words of the Law are often quoted ; and, as in Heb. 9⁸, it is said “the Holy Ghost this signifying,”—which teaches the Divine origin, truth, and authority, not only of the particular part, but of the whole ceremonial system as prefigurative of Christ and His work, and in effect of the whole law. In fact the Hebrews is based upon this postulate ; and all the great evangelical truths taught in it, which constitute the core, essence, and burden of the gospel of our salvation, presuppose this. In 10¹⁵⁻¹⁷ the writings of Jeremiah (31³¹⁻³⁴) are quoted with this preface, “The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us,”—declaring Jeremiah’s words to be the words of the Holy Ghost, as he also says they were the words of God (Jer. 1⁹ etc.).

Great Truths and Arguments based on single Words.

In Heb. 3⁷⁻¹⁹ and 4¹⁻¹¹, great arguments for momentous truths and solemn appeals are based upon Ps. 95⁷ along with Gen. 2², Ex. 20¹¹ etc., for this significant reason, “Wherefore, even as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” And all this is done on the ground assumed and avowed that Scripture is the Word of God, expressed by the Spirit of God, through the chosen organs of God ; and, therefore, it can be absolutely relied upon and confidently reasoned on ; and even single words of it, like in this case the word “To-day” or “rest” (used nine times), may be rightly made the foundations of great truths, and the hinges of weighty arguments, and the ground of solemn appeals, on which men’s salvation and eternity depend,—none of which it could or should be were it not the Word of God.¹ In 8⁷ 1³ he hinges his argument for the

¹ “In this remarkable Epistle God, or the Holy Ghost, is continually named as the Speaker in the passages quoted from the O.T. In this the view of the author clearly expresses itself as to the O.T. and its writers. He regarded God as the Principle (Person) that lived and wrought and spoke in them all by His Holy Spirit, and accordingly Holy Scripture was to him a *pure work of God*, although announced to the world by man.”—Olshausen.

superiority of the Gospel to the Jewish dispensation, and the consequent evanishment of the latter, on the word "new" in the prophecy of Jeremiah (31³¹⁻³⁵); in which the Lord promises, "I will put My law into their minds, and write them in their hearts," etc.,—"In that He saith, A *new* covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which waxeth old is ready to vanish away"; and by the same he proves "the more excellent ministry" and "better covenant," "established upon better promises," of which Christ is the Mediator (v.⁶).

Similarly in chaps. 9 and 10 he proves the superiority and the perpetuity of Christ's priesthood by the words "once" and "one." "Into the second (tabernacle) went the high priest alone *once every year*, not without blood: the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest. But Christ, by His own blood, entered in *once* into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; but now *once* in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifices of Himself. Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many (chap. 9⁷. 8. 12. 25. 28). After He had offered *one* sacrifice for sins for ever, He sat down on the right hand of God. "For by *one* offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (10¹. 12. 14), "whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us" (v.¹⁵); then he quotes Jeremiah's prophecy again as to the *new* covenant. Here we have, first, the insufficiency and consequent transitoriness of the priests and sacrifices and other ceremonials of the Mosaic dispensation proved by their multiplicity and continual renewal. Second, the perfection and perpetuity of the priesthood of Christ and His sacrifice is shown by His offering of Himself once for all, and then being a priest for ever upon His throne. And these great truths and fundamental facts are based upon single words and minute details of the ceremonial; which neither the prophet, nor the lawgiver, nor the original writer foresaw, or could have fully conceived, but which God intended in the record and the Spirit interpreted as in it; and which, therefore, required supernatural inspiration both to express and to explain. In 12²⁶⁻²⁸ with Hag. 2^{6. 7} etc., the words "once" and "yet once more" are made the N.T. basis of the dissolution and the

restitution of all things, and the ground of a solemn Divine exhortation. "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of these things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that these things which cannot be shaken may remain"; wherefore "see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven." But surely such revelations and exhortations could never be made except upon words that were God's, seeing they involved such momentous issues as the salvation of men and the character of God. In Heb. 10⁵⁻¹⁰ the words of the Psalmist, 40⁶ etc., "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do Thy will, O my God," are also quoted as typical of the priestly work of Christ in making atonement for sin. "He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Here the personal feeling and experience of the Psalmist are interpreted as typical and representative of Christ, and made the basis of the cardinal and distinctive Christian revelations of His incarnation and atonement. This shows how far beyond the conception of the writers prophecy often went; and therefore demanded Divine inspiration in the original expression.

Melchisedec and Christ.

The long and significant parallel drawn between Melchisedec and Christ in Hebrews (chaps. 5-7) is another remarkable example of the same kind. The unique King-Priestly character of Christ is typified as to both His Person and work by Melchisedec, the King of righteousness and peace, and the priest of the Most High God, to whom even Abraham, and in him the Levitical priesthood, paid tithes. Not only is it said of Christ, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec,"—quoting Ps. 110⁴, and thereby bringing in Solomon by the way as also a type,—but also in many striking details¹ the parallel is carried out; and in which the argument for the Son abiding a priest for ever is partly dependent on what has been well called the *inspired silence* of Scripture—on what the Bible did not say;—the very mysteriousness of Melchisedec's origin, action, and end arising from this

¹ See Dr. Bannerman on *Inspiration*, pp. 338-341.

silence, making him the better type of the great mystery of godliness—"God manifests in the flesh." But surely the ordering of these events, so far apart in the history of the world, so as to fit into and answer to each other as they do, and all pointing Christwards, required Divine control of both the persons and the events; and certainly the expression of these in the Scriptures, so as to make it suitable to all concerned in the parallel, demanded Divine inspiration;—especially as what was the full meaning and scope of the passages was, from the nature of the case, far beyond the utmost horizons of the writers.¹

The Double Sense of Scripture.

In Heb. 2^{8, 9} we have a striking example of the infinite scope of some O.T. passage far transcending the thought of the writer, "Thou hast put *all* things under his (man's) feet" (Ps. 8⁶), the Psalmist little thinking, probably, that this was by God meant to teach the universal dominion of Jesus. In Heb. 2¹² etc., the words of the experience of the typical sufferer of the 22nd Psalm are applied to Christ as by suffering, bringing Himself and others unto glory.

We thus see in the Hebrews, as in the teaching of Christ and His apostles before, large and striking illustration of what has been called the *double sense* of Scripture—the deeper, fuller, and wider meanings and applicabilities of Scripture than appear on the surface, or was even known or intended by the writers; but which God intended in it, and secured by the form of the expression, and by the providential ordering of events, and selecting and shaping of the typical characters, rites, and figures, so as to make them correspond and fit in to each other with precision and completeness, and yet have all their faces turned to Christ. The narratives were a true history of the events of the time, and yet history embracing the transcendent fulfilments of the future. All this presupposes a Divine providence in the

¹ "It required the Spirit of the same God whose providence could shape kings and prophets in other days into unconscious representatives of the coming Saviour, to guide by His Spirit the historical delineation or the descriptive language applicable to them so as to accurately declare a greater than David or Isaiah."—*Ibid.* p. 336.

events, and demands a Divine inspiration of the Scriptures expressing and embodying all;—an inspiration that extends not only to the chief elements but to all, to the expression as well as to the substance,—to the details, words, figures, and minutest points and turns in the expression, aye, even to the omission and silence of Scripture. With the recognition and adoption of this unique fact and first principle of Bible interpretation the Divine depths, and vast scope, spiritual significance, and diversified, far-reaching applications of God's Word are opened up in their infinite fulness before our ever-growing Christian experience, and invite our eager search and progress in the knowledge of the unsearchable riches of Christ, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God. Without the recognition, and still more by the rejection, of this, the Hebrews, and much of the N.T. Revelation, as well as of the Old, are unintelligible or misleading; and the teaching and authority of Christ and His apostles as religious teachers are set at nought, and with these the religion of Revelation and of Christ; because the source and basis of it in Scripture are discredited or destroyed;—the rejectors, however, only finding themselves faced and confounded by the facts and fulfilments which prove the Bible true and Christ infallible, and leave the rejectors refuted by both reason and Revelation—and disowned by Biblical science and honest interpretation.

In any case, it is beyond dispute that Christ, and His apostles from His example and inspiration, did thus by the Spirit regard and interpret Scripture; and this demonstrates, if they are right, the necessity of supernatural inspiration to produce a Bible thus proved to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine origin and authority even in minutiae,—an inspiration that secured the selection and arrangement of the material, and the conception and expression of the whole as God wished.

Collective Quotations.

Hebrews also furnishes many striking examples of what is called *Collective* quotation, in which several passages are gathered together from various parts of Scripture to prove some important Christian doctrine. Cases of this have been given above, others are found in chap. 1⁵⁻¹³ to prove the exaltation of Christ

over angels and all things,¹ and in chap. 2⁶⁻⁸. 12. 13 to show His real humanity;² in the first of which there are five quotations and the second three; and a third is found in Rom. 3¹⁰⁻¹⁸, where six texts are combined to prove man's sinfulness.³ But such a method of quotation necessarily presupposed that to the apostles, as to Christ, each passage of Scripture was an integral part of one Divine God-breathed whole: and it required the truth, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all, otherwise the proof would fail. And we cannot reject the writer's applications of the O.T. applications of passages, from all the leading divisions of the O.T. indiscriminately, to Christ, or disown his interpretation of the ceremonial system, or his use of the prophets, or his applications of the historical parts, or the spiritual and ethical significance that he attributes to all parts of Scripture, or the Divine origin, truth, and authority which is assumed throughout even in minutiae, without denying that he received a Divine revelation, and disowning his credibility as a religious teacher, and his veracity as a man; for he gives all in the name of God as true and of Divine authority.

In 4² we read, "But the Word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it"; which implied that it was true, and in its nature profitable, if received by faith, which only Divine truth should be.

In 4¹² the nature, power, and effects of God's Word are expressed with striking force and sharpness. "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart,"—which only the Word of God could do. Paul also calls it "the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God" (Eph. 6¹⁷), which, as seen, implies trueness and reliability, precision, sharpness, and irrefragable flawlessness, and which by the very nature of the figure, excludes all theories of indefinite erroneousness. And in 2⁴ we have the Divine sealing of the Word by God Himself, "God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost";—which included miracles of healing, gifts of tongues and prophecy, etc., and the

¹ Ps. 2⁷, 2 Sam. 7¹⁴, Ps. 97⁷ 45^{6, 7} 102²³⁻²⁷.

² Ps. 8⁴⁻⁶ 22²² 18².

³ Ps. 14. 53. 140³ 10⁷, Isa. 59⁷. 8 36¹.

power of the Word in quickening and transforming men's hearts and lives, and making them new creatures in Christ: and all of which were Divine attestations of the Divine origin of their mission, and of the Divine truth and authority of their message. Thus Hebrews gives the same testimony as the other N.T. writings, and contains all the leading elements and facts in proof of the Bible claim found in them, supplies some peculiar to itself, and expresses all with unique sharpness and marked decisiveness.

7. THE UNITED TEACHING OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

This, then, covers the whole Bible, and includes every writer and writing in the N.T., and here the proof might close, for it is conclusive; although it is only mere fragments of the proof that might be given—simply selected samples of the exhaustless stock, practically infinite resources of the evidence; for only the whole Bible in all its limitless fulness, aspects, and atmosphere, with all the possibilities of standpoint, arrangement, combination, and application formed into one great cumulative argument, would be the full proof. The O.T. gives its own testimony and makes its own claim; and with this agrees the N.T., which by every writer, and supremely by Christ, Lord of prophets and apostles, endorses this claim, and seals this testimony with final Divine authority. Paul gives the same testimony, and makes as an apostle of the N.T. a claim at least equal to the prophets of the O.T.; and Peter confirms that claim, and puts Paul's Epistles on a level as Scripture with the O.T. Scriptures. Peter teaches the same doctrine, and advances the same claim; and Jude confirms the canonical character of Peter's Epistles and reconfirms Paul's. John, and James, and Jude bear the same witness, and claim the same Divine authority; and Christ attests and seals all with His Divine authority, by His promise to His apostles at the beginning, and by His solemn endorsement of all Revelation at its close. Paul by placing a quotation from Luke on a level as "Scripture" with one from the Law, and by his companionship and supervision of Luke, attests the canonical authority of the Gospel of Luke, and, therefore, the Acts of the Apostles and all covered by 2 Tim. 3¹⁰; while both Peter and Paul by their very words largely recorded in the Acts give it Divine character and apostolic authority. And should the Pauline authorship of Hebrews be

questioned, Peter by references appears to attest it separately ;¹ besides that, like all the rest, it bears its Divine stamp upon its face, and its Divine seal in its effect upon men's hearts and characters from the first until now, through the testimony of the Spirit. Every Epistle of Paul has the witness in itself that it is the Word of God, besides that all are ratified as above by independent apostolic authority. And every Gospel makes its own identical but independent claim with evidence ; while, as Luke is attested by Paul, so Mark, according to sure tradition, is by Peter, and both Matthew and Mark seem to be by Luke, and therefore indirectly by Paul, and all the Synoptics by John,—both by agreements and differences, additions and omissions, references and complements, while Matthew and John are themselves apostles : and in all of them, by the very words of Christ recorded in them, and largely quoted above, there is abundant Divine evidence and declaration of their Divine origin, character and authority. So that every writer of the N.T., which also carries with it the O.T., bears the identical but independent testimony, and every separate book of it makes the same claim confirmed by the others, and all is endorsed by Christ—even that Holy Scripture is the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, and the Divine rule of faith and life. If it is true, it must be Divine, for it claims that ; and if it is Divine, it must be true, for it declares that.

The closing Notes of the universal Testimony crowned and sealed by Christ.

With four closing notes, then, pealing grandly in with the universal chorus let us close the claim, bind the testimony, and seal the Divine Book. The first comes from the hills of Judea as Zacharias, the first herald of the Gospel dawn, who like the twin co-heralds, Elisabeth and Mary, “filled with the Holy Spirit,” sang of His “remembrance of His mercy, as *He spake to our fathers*, by the prophets” (Luke 1⁵⁴⁻⁵⁵),—“filled with the Holy Ghost prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people : as *He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets*, which have been since the world began” (Luke 1⁶⁷⁻⁶⁹);

¹ See Birks, *The Bible and Modern Thought*, p. 239, etc. ; 2 Pet. 3^{15, 16} with Heb. 2¹⁻³ 4¹⁻³ 3¹⁴ 6⁹. 12 10^{23, 25, 33-39}.

where, after the silence of centuries the true prophetic note peals out grandly as of old, claiming that it was *God* who spake by the mouth of the prophets, by their being filled with His Spirit. The second comes from the wilderness of Judea, loud, weird, and startling, from John the Baptist, when, in fulfilment of his father's and Isaiah's prophecy, "the Word of God came unto John," and he came, in the spirit and power of Elias, "preaching in the wilderness of Judea, crying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and with all the fervour of the great evangelical prophet, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Matt. 3¹⁻³, Luke 3²⁻⁶), "make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40³),—where again the old, significant, prophetic phrase declares the words of the prophet to be the Word of God. The third comes from the lonely island of Patmos, where "for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus" John the beloved apostle lay a prisoner, and received, when "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," from the very lips of his risen Lord, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ"; and near its close received from the mouth of a glorified prophet this significant message, "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets that have the testimony of Jesus, and of them that keep the saying of this Book : for *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*" (Rev. 19¹⁰ 22⁹); where Jesus with His salvation is declared to be the spirit, burden, and the theme of song of all prophecy, whether in earth or heaven, in Scripture or in glory. And, therefore, since He is the soul and body of all Revelation, the Scriptures that embody this must, like Him who is its sum and substance, be true, Divine, and ever enduring. And as John is the last writer of Scripture, and as his writings have a chief and final place in each of the three divisions of the N.T.—the historical, epistolary, and prophetical—; and as he specially emphasises at the end of his writing closing each division that his testimony is true (John 21²⁴, 3 John 1², Rev. 22⁶),—the testimony of Jesus at the close of all (22^{18, 19}) being John's testimony too—; and as John was like Moses at the beginning of Revelation, ten or twelve times commanded by Christ, at its close, to write the testimony in a book, which he finally declares to be "faithful and true," and "the true sayings of God,"—his writings thus bind all parts of Scripture together, and by them with Jesus' final attestation at the end, God seals the whole Book as the

Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever. The fourth note comes from the Lord Himself, a fourfold chord, in which all the parts combine in one grand and solemn Divine harmony, proclaiming finally and for ever, with the authority of God in the name of Godhead, that the Bible is the Word of God, and the Divine rule of faith and life. The first note is given on a mountain top in Galilee before the representatives of His rising Church in His memorable commission to His apostles, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" (Matt. 28^{19, 20}): where what they are to teach the nations is what He taught them; which is what they did by His Spirit, as Paul expressly says, "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14³⁷). The second note is in the judgment-hall of Pilate, where before the representatives of the world's supreme power, He witnessed this good confession, "To this end I am come into the world, that I should *bear witness unto the truth*. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John 18³⁷); and surely, then, His testimony is true as to the prime, basal truth—the standard of truth—that, as He says, "the Scripture" is "the Word of God," and therefore "cannot be broken," or fail, or pass away, in jot or tittle, till all be fulfilled. The third note comes from within the vail in the presence of God in His last great prayer on the eve of death and the verge of eternity, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them"; and He prays "for them also who shall believe on Me through their word" (John 17^{8, 20}). Most significant utterances;—their words, through which He prays men may believe on Him, are His words, and His words are the Father's words, and surely these are and must be true and Divine; and He calls all "Thy Word" (v.¹⁴), and prays "sanctify them through Thy Word, *Thy Word is truth*" (v.¹⁷). Well, therefore, may he say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." The fourth and final note comes from the glorified Lord in heaven in Christ's last word in closing Revelation, and speaks to all the world in the hearing of a listening universe, when finally sealing the Book of God, in these solemn and majestic words, which may well awe all, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall

add unto him the plagues that are written in this book : and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

The Proof closed and conclusive.

Here then the proof is closed, and the position maintained proved to a demonstration. These are the leading passages and phenomena. And though they are only a small portion of what might be given to the same effect—only samples of the practically infinite resources similar, yet the testimony of the passages is for all, and it is absurd to try to limit, as many now do, to those particular passages in which it occurs, and exclude all others. For apart from the fact that many of the principal passages and other proofs apply directly to all Scripture equally, they are in Scripture and by us given simply as specimens of the whole ; and wherever they are tried, they give the same or a similar testimony, —wherever the plummet is dropped, or the soundings taken, the witness is the same and the findings agree. As soon assert that the law of universal gravitation or any other truth of science is not proved, because the universe has not been ransacked and the proof brought from every place, point, and case throughout creation ! and in Scripture, as seen, is seen frequent assertion as to itself was not to be expected. It is only captious perversity, unwilling to face the proof and admit the demonstration that could invent such absurdity. And those given are the chief and decisive passages, facts, and phenomena ; for the explicit passages treating directly and professedly of the subject are phenomena as well as decisive didactic statements expressing the true doctrine of Holy Scripture. They are, indeed, the chief and the most decisive phenomena ; and, along with the other important phenomena and facts adduced, conclusively decide the issue, and put the paltry phenomena solely relied upon by the errorists simply out of comparison. And they are far more than sufficient to demonstrate that the Bible claims to be the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority—and the Divine rule of faith and life. It is an induction of the strictest and most extensive character from all Scripture in a

large number of typical and unquestionable cases, many classes of examples, and lines of evidence, which all combine, with marvellous harmony and complementariness, to utter with amazing unanimity, one loud, clear testimony, and to establish this claim beyond dispute, with a weight of cumulative evidence that is simply overwhelming. Beginning with Paul's great *locus classicus*, that "all Scripture is God-breathed" (*θεόπνευστος*), the claim is found, more or less in every writer and every writing of the N.T. both as to the O.T. and the New. The same claim is proved to have been made with similar unanimity and absoluteness by the O.T. for itself, and by the various writers of it endorsing and confirming each other, as is shown in the N.T. also. Then at the close the writings of John are brought in uniting, completing, and closing all with a wondrous diversity, an ineluctable sharpness, and an awful solemnity as in the very presence of God. And then to crown, complete, and seal all, and for ever silence question, the whole weight of Godhead comes down in the whole teaching and usage of our Lord Himself, as with unique decisiveness and Divine absoluteness He by the Holy Ghost utters in His own words the Father's words, and in the name of eternal Godhead declares, on earth and from heaven, Holy Scripture to be the Word of God, and the Divine rule of faith and life.

CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS ON AND TEACHING OF THE EVIDENCE.

I. THE VAST AMOUNT AND IMMENSE MASS OF IT.

THE clearness and decisiveness of the Bible claim to thorough truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture is the first impression made on every candid mind, on looking at this evidence and the vast amount of it—the immense mass, the impressive array of it ; reminding one in its wide scope and massive strength of great mountain ranges, or vast, solid, imposing lines of impregnable fortifications. Even the most cursory view of it must impress this on every open mind ; yet it is the merest outline, the veriest fragment of what might be produced to the same effect—the fulness of it being such as to make selection a serious difficulty, full statement an impossibility, and complete amassment of it would involve the transcription of a large part of Scripture ; and the more closely it is examined, the longer it is pondered, the more its validity, decisiveness, weight, and invulnerableness will appear. It certainly cannot be ignored or passed by lightly by anyone that wishes to know the truth ; while to anyone that bows to the authority of Scripture teaching it will be of supreme importance, and appear decisive of the first and fundamental question.

2. THE CHARACTER OF IT—DIRECT ; POSITIVE. THE QUALITY AS GOOD AS THE QUANTITY IS GREAT.

For, in the second place, the evidence is not only great and overpowering in amount, but it is also the best and highest in character. The quality, as well as the quantity, of the proof

should give it the supreme place in the decision of the issue. It is the teaching of the Word of God itself on its own inspiration, truthfulness, and authority, as to its first fundamental truth,—the basis of all its other truths, the ground of its own authority in faith and duty. It is, in fact, the only direct evidence. It is the proper because the positive proof. It alone is truly authoritative to all who believe in Revelation, or own that God speaks in His Word. The other evidence is at best secondary and collateral, to be valued, and received only as confirmatory. The proper evidence for any revealed truth, or controverted religious question, is Scripture evidence; and when that is fully adduced, the doctrine is proved, and the controversy settled, for everyone that owns God's authority in Revelation. Nor must it ever be forgotten that, as shown above, even within Scripture itself, the supreme and decisive weight must be always given to the direct, explicit passages dealing professedly with the subject; and not to any inferences from phenomena, or deductions from apparent facts,—least of all from difficulties arising from other things, or connected with the doctrine taught in the explicit passages. For there are difficulties connected with every truth of Revelation, science, or life; so that men must ever follow the proper positive evidence notwithstanding difficulties, or believe nothing. Besides, we are much more liable to error in our inferences from phenomena or facts, than in our interpretation of the meaning of explicit passages treating expressly of the doctrine. And further, these explicit passages are the direct evidence and express revelation on the subject.

3. THE UNIQUE VARIETY OF IT.

A third thing remarkable in the evidence of Scripture is its marvellous variety. Almost every possible kind of proof is found in simply embarrassing abundance. We have it in many explicit passages, in the very words of our Lord Himself, and of His prophets and apostles, when treating directly and avowedly of the subject. We have it in countless indirect, but also very clear and ineluctable references and quotations; and in the general usage of Christ and His apostles,—in which the inviolable truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture are assumed as unquestionable postulates, and made the indisputable bases of great

arguments, conveying vital and all-important revelations. We have it in the names and titles, epithets and characterisations of Holy Writ; as well as in the attributes and qualities ascribed to it, and the unique character and position given to it. We have it set forth or expressed in texts and phrases, in principal statements and parenthetical clauses; implied or presupposed in great principles and fundamental facts; as well as in the smallest circumstances and most minute details. We find it asserted and declared, assumed and postulated. We find it explicitly claimed and implicitly taught, emphatically proclaimed and tacitly presupposed. We find it expressed in the quietest narrative and the most impassioned orations, in the most general abstract statements and in the most specific concrete examples.

4. THE PERVASIVENESS OF ITS CLAIM FOR TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY.

Akin to this, covered by it or implied in it, is the next remarkable thing in this evidence, viz. the pervasiveness of this claim to truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority. By this is not meant that it is expressly stated, or directly made in every book or part of a book. For in a book or collection of books whose essential unity is so well marked, forcibly felt, and universally recognised, this was not to be expected;—especially as what is predicated and claimed in the various parts belongs to all therein. Hence the obvious absurdity of the puerile notion of some that it is only for each particular case where this is expressly stated that the claim is made; as if there were no general statements bearing on, or no Divine sanction to them as a whole. Nevertheless, we find this claim pervading the historical and the poetical, the doctrinal and the devotional, the philosophic and the apocalyptic, the practical and the allegorical books. We find it also pervading the prophets and the apostles, the historians and the psalmists, the seers and the sages, the servants and the Lord,—more or less all the writers, and all the writings of O.T. and N.T. This is not less in the pervasive tone of authority, and air of certainty, sense of reality, and spirit of transparent truthfulness manifest throughout Scripture, consciously felt in reading it, than in the explicit statements, emphatic utterances, and solemn declarations. Nor is it ever

suggested or implied that what is thus claimed and predicated generally and pervasively, is restricted to particular parts or things therein. What is said is said of all without distinction,—all parts and kinds of things indiscriminately being referred to and used as equally and unquestionably true and trustworthy. The modern distinction between what is true and what is false, in the Word of God, is unknown to writers of Scripture, and would have shocked the apostles and prophets, and most of all the Son of God Himself, who set His solemn seal to every jot and tittle of it.

And the ancient Jewish theory of degrees of inspiration is now being resurrected again in the close of this century, as in the end of the last (for centuries like individuals and nations, get into their dotage), and that, too, by the would-be advanced writers on this question.¹ This theory has absolutely no place in Holy Writ, though it is rampant in Jewish jargon and Rabbinical lore, naturalistic theology, and modern Rationalism. Whatever plausible reason may be given for this theory, and whatever elements of truth may be intended to be expressed by it, there is no authority for it in Scripture. On the contrary, so far as it is invented or intended to invade or lessen the inviolable truth and Divine authority of God's Word,—as now for the first time it seemed revived to do,—it is directly in the teeth of the pervasive tone and prevailing claim of Scripture; and should be set aside as an unauthorised Rabbinical relic, raised from the dead, and presented as advanced thought by the abettors of Rationalism, in the close of the nineteenth century!

5. ITS INEVASIBLENESS.

A further thing that strikes one, in weighing this vast and varied positive evidence for the Scripture claim, is its inevitableness. It seems almost incredible that any man believing in God's Word at all can seriously face it and yet remain unbelieving. It appears impossible to conceive how he can evade or withstand it. Certainly it requires very dexterous power of shutting the eyes to the plainest facts, and an unenviable facility of resisting evidence; as it unquestionably demands an amazing measure of perverse ingenuity to neutralise it; while to refute or

¹ See Dr. Ladd, Dr. Cave, Dr. Sanday.

disprove it will require infinitely greater courage and acumen than its opponents have ever yet shown in connection with it. By apparently every possible device that thought or language was capable of, it is explicitly and inevasibly taught and declared, so that men might find it hard to evade it, and be without excuse if they rejected it. It is difficult to conceive how, if God had intended to express and declare the truth, reliability, and Divine authority of His Word, He could more unequivocally and inevasibly have done so than He has done. It stands out in its impressive and impregnable strength, like massive granite walls, that cannot be passed or penetrated by anyone that fairly faces it. Nor is it conceivable how God could have taught this with greater clearness and decisiveness, than in the majestic words of our Lord Himself, "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 18). It matters not what any other says, "Let God be true, and every man a liar." The resources of language, thought, and usage appear to have been exhausted in putting this beyond question, and in rendering unbelief inexcusable,—so far at least as the teaching of Scripture is concerned, and the authority of God speaking in His Word is to be held decisive on the question ; and every believer in revelation is bound to say, "To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. viii. 20).

6. THE CUMULATIVE FORCE AND COMPLETENESS OF IT.

Another thing that strikes one in considering this evidence is the uniqueness and the cumulative force of it. It will be exceedingly difficult to find any truth of revelation for which an equal amount and variety of Biblical evidence can be produced—not even for the doctrines of the Incarnation and Divinity of our Lord. For while the evidence of the one pervades Scripture, the proper proof of the other is limited to the N.T., and is there expressed explicitly and emphatically only in some parts thereof. Nor are there wanting some statements and phenomena that give an appearance of foothold and plausibility to Arianism and Unitarianism. Hence these heresies have lived adown the ages, and are living still—yea, are reviving now in various forms and

modifications among the preachers and teachers of Churches professedly Trinitarian. Nay more, they will live and grow, and are warranted in doing so if the error of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture prevails, and men, on the ground of it, are free and bound to pick and choose, by the criterion of mere human reason, what they will receive and what reject in the Word of God. Nor is it possible to arrest or refute this or any error, or authoritatively to ascertain any truth of revelation except upon the basis of a true and trustworthy Scripture. So that in producing and maintaining the Bible claim to trustworthiness and Divine authority, we are supporting and defending every truth of Revelation, and laying the basis on which alone a theology can be built from Holy Writ. The evidence for this fundamental doctrine is, as seen, not only clear and strong, but decisive and overwhelming, yea unique, more abundant, varied, and ineluctable than for any other truth of God's Word. It is found everywhere pervading O.T. and New; in tone, in spirit, in didactic statement, in apologetic argument, in names, in titles, in attributes, in characterisations, in explicit teaching, in allegory, in inference, in quotation and reference, in facts and phenomena, in words and phrases, in assertions, declarations, postulates, and assumptions, claims, and endorsements; by prophets, priests, apostles, evangelists, angels, and God—*ad infinitum*. And it is only when we look at it altogether, and in its connections and mutually corroborative character that we can feel its full and resistless cumulative force. In vain shall we seek for evidence of any doctrine in Scripture, or try to ascertain any truth from Revelation, or profess to believe anything on the authority of God speaking in His Word, if we reject or refuse to own, or ignore the evidence for this doctrine—the demonstration of this truth. No other doctrine approaches to it in the quantity and quality and conclusiveness of the evidence.

ITS FUNDAMENTAL RELATION TO ALL THE OTHER TRUTHS AND CLAIMS OF SCRIPTURE.

And as the evidence for it is unique, so also is the position it occupies in relation to all the other truths of Revelation, as has been often indicated. It lies at the foundation of them all. It is made the basis of every other doctrine. It is the avowed

ground on which every particular truth and statement of Revelation is presented for our belief. The teaching of Scripture on its own truthfulness and authority is of necessity the foundation-stone of its teaching on all other subjects. It is because it claims to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, in the name of God, and for that reason alone, that it claims our faith and obedience in anything; and on that ground alone can we be under obligation to believe and obey it as the Word of Him that cannot lie or err. No doubt our conviction and assurance that it is the Word of God may come from many sources and causes—specially the testimony of the Spirit with the truth in our consciousness, of which the Reformers made so much.¹ But it is simply and solely because it is and claims to be the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and authoritative—that any or all of its other truths and statements, though they too may appeal to our spirits, possess Divine sanction and authority, and lay us under obligation to belief and obedience.

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-ACCEPTANCE OF IT.

It therefore follows—*First*, That, if the evidence is not accepted for this best established truth, there is no sufficient reason for accepting any truth of Revelation. *Second*, If we do not receive this doctrine, which is thus laid at the basis of all the others, and is made the express ground of their reception, we do not receive any of them on the authority of God speaking in His Word. Scripture is *ipso facto* deprived of any intrinsic and independent authority; and it receives no regard and carries no weight simply as the Word of God. If we receive its testimony in anything, we do this not because God gives it in His Word as true, but simply because it appeals to our consciousness, which a pure rationalist may do. *Third*, If we deny this, the first and fundamental claim to truthfulness and Divine authority so expressly and inevitably made, then we virtually disown not merely the reliability and authority, but the veracity and credibility of God's Word; and that not only in this one thing but in everything. For if the Bible claims, in the name of God, to speak the

¹ See *Westminster Confession of Faith*; Principal Wm. Cunningham's *Lectures*, and *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*; Dr. Robertson Smith's *O. T. in the Jewish Church*.

truth, and nothing but the truth, and puts this claim as the foundation of all its teaching, and makes this the ground of the reception of all its doctrines, then, if you say that in this it has stated what is not true, you self-evidently deny not only its infallibility, but disown its veracity, and declare that it has made a false claim in God's name; and you thus utterly destroy its credibility, and absolutely annihilate its Divine authority in anything. You *ipso facto* assert that the Bible is not the Word of God at all, but only the false and incredible word of deceived or deceiving men. So that the denial, directly or indirectly, of this its primary and foundation claim to teach the truth, and nothing but the truth, with God's authority, is a denial of the Divine authority and independent truthfulness of anything based thereon, of everything stated therein. It is a contradiction of the first claim of Scripture and a declaration, explicitly or practically, of the unreliability and falseness of the basis of all its statements. Yea, it is in effect a repudiation of the Divine origin, veracity, and credibility of Holy Scripture as a whole. Nor is it possible to evade these tremendous conclusions except by proving that Scripture does not make this claim for itself, and that the evidence adduced which demonstrates this is not proof nor amounts to even probability; for, as Butler shows, even probability in such things is, and ought to be, sufficient ground for both faith and action—"Probability is the guide of life." This, I make bold to say, is an impossibility, as the attempt to do so will convince anyone that fairly faces it and seriously grapples with it.

7. ITS DIVINE DECISIVENESS AND FINALITY CULMINATING IN CHRIST.

Nor is this all, for the last and most remarkable thing in this evidence is that it centres and culminates in Christ. He is, in fact, the beginning, middle, and end of it. It is His clear and ineluctable words that we put in the front of it. It is His solemn and majestic utterances that we most frequently appeal to. And it is on His infallible truthfulness and Divine authority that we ultimately, and with unlimited confidence, take our stand. It is the Lord Himself, and none less than He, who endorses the claim, sanctions the statements, and by His very

words declares the inviolability of even the O.T., the most assailed and assailable part of Scripture. And it is He who, in anticipation, promises the Holy Ghost, as the Spirit of truth, to the writers of the N.T., to lead them into all truth, and to ensure that what they said or taught in His name would be thus not their words only, but the very Word of God, since it was not they but the Spirit of their Father that spoke in and through them. It is He who, more than any other, in O.T. or New, uses and appeals to all kinds of things, passages, facts, and words in Scripture indiscriminately as unquestionably true and Divinely authoritative; and makes them the axioms of great arguments, the germs of highest truths, and the roots of new revelations. It is He who, from His heavenly glory, by the awful words and solemn sanctions with which He closes the volume of Revelation (Rev. xxii. 18, 19), puts His Divine seal and imprimatur on it as the Word of God, warning men against tampering with even its words on their peril. It is He who, by the utterances He gives about it, the epithets He applies to it, the names and qualities He ascribes to it, and the use He makes of it, most decisively settles, and most absolutely declares it to be in all its parts and contents, without distinction, the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever.

Therefore, here again everything that has been said about the tremendous consequences of denying the truthfulness and Divine authority claimed for Scripture by itself applies with infinitely augmented force and momentousness to Christ Himself. For that claim in its integrity He endorses with an awful absoluteness. By these Scriptures He stands with a tremendous decisiveness. With them, in fact, as their Author, Fulfiller, and End, He identifies Himself. With them in His hands, and sealed by His authority, He stands out before the world, through all the ages, and declares them to be the Word of God, that cannot lie or err, be violated, or pass away; and with most awful sanctions He warns every man of the peril of daring to impinge on their integrity or impugn their authority. So that with them He with His religion stands or falls. Men cannot deny or reject them or their claim without denying or rejecting Him and His. Therefore, if men will reject their first and fundamental claim, they *must* reject the truthfulness of Him who is the Truth, and deny the Divine authority, even in religious things—in the prime

and supreme religious question—of the Son of God. By how much soever men directly or indirectly impugn their truthfulness, weaken their trustworthiness, or impinge on their authority, by so much they assail His and Him. And since He ever gives His Words as not His words only but the Father's—"the words of Him that sent Me,"—and since they were all uttered, as He said, through the power of the Spirit of God, and since Holy Scripture is actually identified with God, the denial of the root and basal claim of Scripture is virtually tantamount to a denial of the authority and testimony of Godhead.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT THIS EVIDENCE SETTLES.

I. THAT OURS IS NOT AN *A PRIORI* THEORY, BUT A FACT AND A REVELATION.

THIS evidence settles—First, that the doctrine of the truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture is no mere *à priori* dogma of theology or preconceived theory of inspiration, as has so often, so falsely, and so persistently been averred by the opponents of the Bible doctrine, who are more given to misrepresentation and abuse of the real views than to refutation of the arguments, to reckless assertion rather than answering the evidence. Whatever it is, it is self-evidently not a preconceived theory, but professedly and patently the clearest teaching of Scripture. It is a doctrine of Revelation, as to its written embodiment in Scripture, gathered from the widest and most careful induction of all Scripture. It is a striking contrast to the fragmentary, one-sided caricature so pretentiously palmed off as an induction by the assertors of the Bible's erroneousess. It is simply the doctrine expressly taught about itself and claimed for itself by the explicit passages of God's Word on the subject. It is not an inference from the passages, but the simple meaning of them,—the explicit teaching of them,—the real and only reasonable interpretation of them.

The advocates of the opposite doctrine do not even attempt to produce a single passage teaching expressly or implicitly their error. They cannot, therefore, pretend to have for it a single element of what alone is proper positive proof for any doctrine. When our view is taught or confirmed by the implications of other less direct passages, the doctrine is unequivocally implied ; whereas, here again there is for the opposite view no such necessary implications. So far as our doctrine is inferred from

Scripture facts and phenomena, the inference is necessary, and they are the main and most prevalent facts. The phenomena from which the opposite view is deduced are only the comparatively rare and exceptional,—the conclusion is not conclusive, and the phenomena are generally misunderstood or misapplied, or admit of other explanations. And so far as the opposite doctrine is composed of and based upon difficulties connected with the Bible claim,—as it almost wholly is,—there is no valid ground or legitimate proof at all, nor any real disproof or invalidation of the Bible doctrine. Every truth has some difficulties, some of the best established have most serious, and hitherto insoluble difficulties. Besides, the difficulties of their own theory are infinitely greater than those of the Bible truth, which are often trivial, ludicrous, mostly vanished or vanishing; they all admit of a possible explanation (which is the utmost that is logically required), and have superabundance of reasons to account for them. So that our doctrine is not an *à priori* theory of inspiration, nor a theory at all, but simply the clearest teaching of Scripture, only the expression and embodiment of the foundation claim of God's Word. Theirs is a theory made of difficulties,—an absurd foundation for any theory; and is based upon what will in all probability be found to be nothing.

2. IT REQUIRES THE ERRORISTS TO ANSWER IT,
WHICH THEY NEVER ATTEMPT.

This evidence lays on the opponents of the Bible claim the obligation to face, answer, or explain it, if they profess to believe in the authority of Scripture or of Christ at all. And yet this is just what they will not do,—what they have never once seriously attempted to do, what they all with one accord systematically and persistently eschew doing; and that, too, although they have been repeatedly called on to do it, and by this restatement are again asked, challenged, and required to do it, or be justly held as denying Revelation altogether, and setting aside the teaching and authority of God's Word and of God's Son on this first and radical religious question, which lies at the basis of all religious questions, and is the prime condition of the authoritative settlement of any of them. Instead, however, of facing and weighing the evidence, far less meeting the force of the argument it

supplies and constitutes for the truth and Divine authority of Scripture, they usually ignore it altogether, as if it did not exist or had never been adduced. Generally they set it aside practically, and proceed with their criticism and speculations as though it were unknown or irrelevant, or of no importance, or without authority. Sometimes they affect to despise it, and speak with contempt of quoting texts to prove doctrines, as if their *ipse dixit* were of infinitely higher authority than the declarations of God's Word,—and as if Bible passages treating professedly of the question were not the best and decisive evidence—the only proper proof of a Bible doctrine,—when one clear, explicit, certain passage is and should be as decisive as a million to all who own the authority of God speaking in His Word. Frequently they caricature the statements and misrepresent the real position of defenders of the truth, finding abuse easier than argument, and misrepresentation more hopeful than refutation. But the one thing they will *never* venture to do,—that even defiance will not provoke them to attempt, that with a significant scrupulosity they ever evade doing,—is to meet the evidence or seriously attempt to answer or grapple with the argument. The reason is not far to seek—they cannot. They have a shrewd suspicion that they cannot. It is known and felt to be unanswerable. Therefore, rather than attempt and fail to answer, it is judged better and more politic to leave it prudently unanswered, unattempted !

3. IT PRECLUDES ALL THEORIES OF INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS.

This evidence precludes and is decisive against all theories of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture. What the leading theories are, and how they are each equally precluded, and that they are all essentially Rationalistic as well as otherwise anti-scriptural, untenable, and evil, will be shown in detail below.¹ But meantime, looking at them generally, this conclusion the evidence above inevitably necessitates. Many of the greatest scholars and ablest theologians of our century and of the previous centuries, as well as the Churches generally, have held that the Scripture teaching requires, and the Bible claim involves, the infallible truth, entire trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all

¹ Book VI.

Scripture, and that the Bible in its integrity is in truth the very Word of God; while some hold that it is entirely free from untrue statement of any kind, as it was originally given,—God-breathed through the inspired writers,—and when it is properly interpreted—when its true intent, its real, God-intended meaning is ascertained. And unquestionably there is much in the evidence, especially in the words and usage of our Lord Himself, that seems to favour this as its full, or admissible significance; while the whole appears to point to this as its legitimate, conjoint effect. Nor can it be denied that whatever exaggerated utterances may have been made, or extreme positions taken by injudicious individuals on the outskirts of this definite general position, the arguments for it have never yet been grappled with, far less answered by the errorists. Nay more, we feel satisfied that when they really and seriously join issue with the upholders of this strictest, if you will, extremest position on the ground of “What saith the Lord,” they will not be triumphant, in the argument, if not almost forced either to abandon their own position, or the independent authority of Scripture. So far as we have watched recent skirmishes on this point, even under that most extreme and unwarrantable, if not unintelligible, title “The absolute inerrancy” of Scripture,¹ we have only been confirmed in this conviction, and been impressed with the crudeness of the thinking, and the weakness of the reasoning of the boldest champions of the errancy and erroneousness of Scripture; even when the defenders of “absolute inerrancy”—whatever *that* may mean—were by no means generally either the ablest or the wisest. What must the issue be when the real tug-of-war has come? And after all that has been recently adduced, it may still be said and held as truly as when Dr. Farrar wrote many years ago, that all the perverse ingenuity of scepticism has not been able to make out one demonstrable error in Scripture when properly interpreted.

THE UNWISDOM OF TAKING A STAND ON THE GROUND OF ABSOLUTE INERRANCY.

Nevertheless, there could scarcely be a greater tactical mistake than to fight now the great battle on which such tremendous

¹ See recent discussion in *The British Weekly*.

issues ultimately hang as the truth of our religion and the authority of our Lord, upon such a narrow ground, in such a negative form, and in such a merely defensive attitude. It is usually considered unwise in warfare to act only on the defensive. Generally the advantages lie with assuming the aggressive. This is true pre-eminently in theological warfare. How often has scepticism been vanquished when Christian Apology has forced it to declare positively its own position, or produce its substitute for Christianity. Then, instead of merely defending Christianity, it has assailed infidelity, won an easy victory, and demonstrated that the Christian's faith was much more reasonable than the sceptic's unbelief. How much more easy and effectual is it to refute all forms and shades of Rationalism, by attacking their position, theories, and methods, than by merely defending our own? And yet it is the latter, as we have been grieved to note, that of recent years has been almost exclusively followed by the upholders of the Bible claim. This has given the greatest advantage to the opponents, and placed the maintenance of the truth at most serious disadvantage. How much wiser and stronger to assume the aggressive, carry the war into the enemy's camp, compel them to declare positively their own position, and then assail that, and show the untenableness of their theories! Instead of merely standing on the defensive, and laying the position defended open to attack at any of the countless points along the whole line, how much better to expose and attack the errorists' position! Then present the evidence for the Scripture claim, and compel them to answer that evidence, or to abandon assailing the truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture as illegitimate and irrelevant for all who are not prepared to deny its veracity and credibility. For as it is, so far as this attack has any validity, they assail not our distinctive position, but a position which they as much as we require to maintain against the common unbelieving foe.

THE STRENGTH OF THE POSITION OF TRUTHFULNESS,
TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY.

In place of defending a negative form of the doctrine of Scripture, and that, too, under the designation coined by the opponents, with a view the more effectually to assail the truth,

namely, "Inerrancy or absolute inerrancy,"—a phrase most undefined and objectionable in itself, used in different senses by different persons, itself requiring and difficult of definition, and frequently so used as to beg the whole question,—how much stronger to maintain the doctrine of Scripture in the positive form of its truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority ; which can be established by direct and superabundant evidence, and which has been triumphantly maintained through the countless controversies of centuries, and which no believer in Revelation can assail without undermining his own position and exposing himself to a resistless assault from the sceptic on the one side, and the Bible claim upon the other. For, in fact, it requires the errorist to maintain in turn two apparently contradictory positions—namely, the trustworthiness and authoritative-ness of Scripture on the one hand, and its indefinite erroneousness and illimitable untrustworthiness on the other—which is more untenable than unstable equilibrium. And instead of fighting this great battle, on which such momentous issues hang, on the narrow, negative, and in some respects despicable point of absolute inerrancy, which is misleading, indefinable precisely, which is strictly speaking indefensible (because absolute inerrancy is predicable properly only of God, and Divine truth cannot dwell perfectly or absolutely save in the Divine mind, and cannot be conceived or expressed with absolute perfection through human thought and language, as we have seen), and most disadvantageous, how much wiser, and more satisfactory, to bring the question to an issue on the broad and general grounds in which the opposing parties confront and conflict with each other, along the whole line, like two parallel antagonistic positions! These are the thorough truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture on the one side ; and the indefinite erroneousness, illimitable untrustworthiness, and unlimited unauthoritativeness on the other. For these are really the opposite positions now. What the opponents of the Bible claim mean is not merely that the Bible is not inerrant, but that it is erroneous. Doubtless to give themselves the greater advantage in the attack, to make their position seem less objectionable, and to make the upholders of the Bible claim appear as if required to prove a negative, they have deftly contrived to get the controversy put in this form, and many unwary and unwise defenders of the truth

have foolishly accepted these terms, and entered the conflict on this narrow ground, under the greatest disadvantages. They thus place themselves and the truth in a false, weak, if not perilous position. But what the opponents really mean—as their practice, examples, and other teaching show, and as every wise defender of the truth should make manifest—is that Scripture is erroneous—*indefinitely* erroneous. For as a matter of fact they do not, as from the nature of the case they *cannot*, tell or specify precisely what is true and what is false in Scripture, or even give any sure principle or infallible means by which we could ascertain this definitely and inerrantly for ourselves. Nor is it, as shown above, merely indefinitely erroneous in small and trifling things, and kinds of things, whatever they may sometimes allege, or the more guarded may at times appear to restrict the erroneousness to.

THE ERRORISTS ALLEGE INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS IN EVERY KIND OF THING IN SCRIPTURE.

But it is a denial of inerrancy, and an assertion of erroneousness in an indefinite number of kinds of things,—in fact in every kind of thing,—no kind of thing being excepted from errancy. For errancy and erroneousness, as a matter of fact, is alleged—as may be seen *ad nauseum* in the current literature on the subject, in the least rationalistic—not only in words and expressions, in dates and numbers, but in facts and references, in quotations, interpretations, and reasoning; in leading representations and salient features, as well as in individual details; in principles, and dominating ideas, as in special applications and particular inferences; ay, in moral and religious teaching as much as in everything else. Innumerable errors, mistakes and false statements, and wrong teaching are alleged in chronology and genealogy, history and prophecy, science and philosophy, exegesis and methods of reasoning, ethics and theology, religion and morals—in short, in every kind of thing. This is shown *ad libitum* by the examples given, by the various kinds of errors alleged, by the criticism of and liberties taken with all parts and elements of Scripture, and in the supposed critical results,—which are often quite inconsistent with the truthfulness and trustworthiness thereof, subversive of its veracity and credi-

bility, and practically and patently destructive of its Divine authority.

THEIR EXPLANATION OF ITS ORIGIN.

Nor do the opponents of the Bible claim merely thus illustrate their real meaning and the practical results of their theories ; they also are not slow to inform us of the causes and reasons of this indefinite erroneousness. They attribute it to the ignorance of the times in which the Scriptures were written, and the false conceptions and perverting prejudices of the writers ; to the influence of the low and wrong moral ideas and practices, and the narrow and false religious conceptions prevalent in the current thought and life of those dark ages,—in which the writers of Scripture shared, and from which their writings are not exempt. They speak of the local and limited horizons, and the national and religious exclusiveness of the Jews, who have given us the Bible ; which they allege are expressed in the exaggeration, intolerance, and “Jewish presumption,” if not fanaticism, of the prophets ; and in the one-sidedness and traditionalism of the self-seeking priestly writers of the O.T., and in the credulity and imaginativeness of the Apostolic writers of the N.T. They urge the blinding effects of tradition, superstition, and the uncritical methods of credulous times ; which are found in the legendary beliefs, fallacious reasonings, and numerous misinterpretations of the earlier by the later writers of Scripture. These are supposed to explain the alleged “exegetical mistakes” and other erroneous teachings of Christ Himself, or at least of the statements and records of them given by His inspired apostles !

Whatever may be thought of these remarkable assertions and explanations, and of the principles that underlie them, as well as the issues flowing from them, which are serious enough,—they are held more or less by *all* the opponents of the Bible claim ; and the principle of all of them is in the least rationalistic of them. However much they may differ as to some of them and other things, they all, by disowning this claim, equally deny the inerrancy and assert the erroneousness of the first and fundamental teaching of God’s Word. These assertions and explanations at least demonstrate that what our opponents really mean when they deny the inerrancy of Scripture is not merely that it

is not inerrant in everything, but that there is not any kind of thing in which it is inerrant, and that it has actually erred in every kind of thing—in its religious and moral teaching as well as in everything else—in that specially. The erroneous and wrong teaching in these is now usually given as the first, and throughout the most prominent exemplifications of their common principle.

THIS INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS ALLEGED AND URGED SPECIALLY OF THE BIBLE IN RELIGIOUS AND MORAL TEACHING.

Further, this alleged erroneousness is indefinite. There is no precise or definite limit given, or possible, on their common rationalistic principle. As matter of fact they, *firstly*, generally deny the inerrancy of Scripture, which, when explained and put positively,—as every theory of Scripture should be if the truth or falsehood of it is to be ascertained,—is equivalent to an assertion of the erroneousness of Scripture. *Secondly*, when you inquire more closely, you find that the errancy and erroneousness are indefinite, without any specific limitation, with no sound principle, or sure means of making them definite. *Thirdly*, when you examine as to what *kind* of things this erroneousness is alleged of, you find from the examples given, and the results and methods of the application of their principle to Scripture, that it is asserted of every kind of thing, and that there is no kind of thing—not even the most ethical, religious, or spiritual exempted from this category—to which this principle is not applied. And, *fourthly*, when you investigate more thoroughly still, you perceive that Scripture is held to be *indefinitely* erroneous in every kind of thing. Not only is there no kind of element excepted from the category of erroneousness,—not even the purely ethical, or the strictly religious, and supremely spiritual,—but the very erroneousness itself is in each and all of them held to be indefinite, unlimited—ay, on their principle, illimitable. When put positively this is the theory our opponents hold, plainly teach, and practically exemplify in the application and illustration of their principle. The examples or illustrations of this indefinite erroneousness which they usually most eagerly and confidently produce, are taken from the distinctively moral and religious elements of Scripture.

Further, from the very nature of their principles, the alleged erroneousness in even those ethical and spiritual elements which they all hold to be the special purpose of Scripture to reveal, and in which Scripture has generally been held to be, if in anything, truthful, trustworthy, and of Divine authority—the erroneousness is not only indefinite, but also of necessity illimitable. For if errancy and erroneousness is alleged in every kind of thing to an indefinite extent, then obviously it is impossible to limit the erroneousness; and it is an apparent departure from their principles to attempt to do so. And if it were attempted to assert that although Scripture is erroneous in some ethical and religious things, it is inerrant and authoritative in others, or in some specific religious truth,—say the divinity of Christ, or the atonement, or justification by faith, or the resurrection of the dead,—yet it is clearly impossible on their theory of indefinite erroneousness to ascertain inerrantly and authoritatively what these things are, or how we can be infallibly certain of the truth and Divine authority of any one doctrine in religion or ethics. Nor is it possible or legitimate to attempt doing so without practically abandoning their own theory and violating their own principle. Because there is not a shadow of a ground in God's Word for any such distinction between some religious and moral elements in Scripture and others; nor has any such Biblical ground been ever produced, or even pretended. Besides, their very assertion of indefinite erroneousness, and still more the principle on which the assertion is based—even that man's own reason may and must judge as to what in the moral and religious teaching is right and what wrong—manifestly for them set aside the independent authority of God's Word, deny the Bible claim, and deprive it of any intrinsic, far less Divine authority in religion or morals; as alleged, it has taught serious error on these.

REASON RECEIVES SUPREMACY OVER REVELATION.

Therefore, *third*, every individual and varying mind must for itself, according to its own inward light, dispositions, and prepossessions, determine what to receive and what to reject of the moral and religious teaching of Scripture; and become to itself the sole and supreme standard in ethics and religion, even in the Word of God. And since different minds will and do have

different ideas, and come to different, often opposite conclusions, as to what is true and what false in Scripture,—witness Dr. Ladd and Dr. Martineau ; yea, the same man not infrequently coming to different conclusions at different times,—it follows, as a matter of sheer and simple mental necessity, that an infallible authoritative limit of erroneousness is on this principle patently impossible, and that the erroneousness is, therefore, not only indefinite and unlimited, but from the very nature of the case illimitable.

THE MOMENTOUS CONSEQUENCES OF THE ERRORISTS' THEORIES.

From this certain very momentous results follow, which it is well to set forth in order with distinctness. *First.* The Bible on this theory is not an inerrant standard in anything—as little in ethics or religion as in anything else. For in these pre-eminently and most seriously it, as alleged, has erred, and taught as true and right what is false and wrong. It can, therefore, be no longer regarded as the infallible rule of faith and life, nor even as the standard of religion or morals at all. *Second.* It possesses no intrinsic, far less Divine authority in anything—no more in religion or morality than in other things ; as not in matters of science, philosophy, or history, so not in matters distinctively of religion, even when given by revelation ; though it professedly deals with these, was expressly given for them, and emphatically claims Divine authority on them. For it is averred to have erred indefinitely in its teaching in such things. *Third.* The sole and supreme standard in religion and ethics, as in everything else, is the errant and erring reason of erring and varying men, which is bald Rationalism, which is simple absurdity. In short, the ultimate result of setting aside the Bible as the standard and authority of truth and duty is not to give us a better standard for a worse, but to deprive us of a standard altogether.

IT IS VAIN TO APPEAL TO THE TEACHING OF CHRIST TO AVOID THESE ISSUES.

It is vain to seek to avoid this conclusion, or to escape from this position by talking largely about the teaching and the authority of Christ. For His teaching and authority have been

antecedently disowned in asserting the indefinite and illimitable erroneousness of the Word of God, which in its integrity He endorsed and sealed with His Divine authority. Christ is the last who will accept honour to Himself at the cost of dishonour to His servants, the apostles and prophets, and of degradation to these sacred Scriptures, which He inspired them to write as the true and inviolable Word of God. Besides, His teaching and authority are specifically set at nought by the theory that Scripture is not truthful, but indefinitely erroneous in every kind of thing,—signally in religion and morals. For if Christ's words mean anything, they declare that Holy Scripture is true, inviolable, and of Divine authority, at least in these things. And the theory that denies this and asserts the opposite, implicitly denies the truth and authority of the teaching of Christ in religion and morals; and implies that even in these, which are distinctly within His peculiar sphere, He is not as a teacher infallible, but erroneous and unreliable, and that, too, on the source and standard of religion and ethics. In fact, on this theory His teaching is of necessity just as indefinitely erroneous and unauthoritative as the Scriptures,—His varying in all as theirs. He by sanctioning and endorsing, as well as inspiring and coming to fulfil the Sacred Oracles, identifies Himself with them, and binds indissolubly His truth and authority with theirs.

Further, we get our whole knowledge of the teaching of Jesus through these alleged to be indefinitely erroneous writings, and cannot get it otherwise. Therefore, so far as they are erroneous or wrong, so far precisely is His teaching,—the two vary as each other. Whatever may have been the teaching of Jesus, we get all that we know or can know of it exclusively through the conceptions and writings of men alleged to be indefinitely erroneous in both; so that His teaching to us is just as erroneous or inerrant as the writings of the evangelists, neither more nor less. Therefore, bringing in the teaching and authority of Christ to make up for and replace the discredited truthfulness and authority of the inspired writers, and God-breathed writings of Scripture, is evidently a vain device and a foolish delusion, which can impose only on the ignorant and unthinking, and leave those who know the issues precisely as they were. *First.* Because so far as the words of Christ known to us teach anything, they teach that Christ stands by and endorses the

Scriptures. *Second.* Because our whole knowledge of His teaching is derived solely from these Scriptures. But though the teaching and authority of Christ do not thus give one iota of relief from the difficulties and absurdities of the position of the teachers of the indefinite erroneousness of God's Word, they do bring them with their daring theories into the fierce light of that Awful Presence where they least like to have them searched, and before which yet the heavens and the earth, and all the bold but baseless things therein, shall flee away, and no place be found for them.

There, meantime, we leave them, feeling assured that to all who in any way, and in anything, regard the authority of God, speaking in His Word, this statement of what is meant by and involved in all theories of indefinite erroneousness is their refutation.

Nor is it possible to evade these tremendous issues except by showing that neither the Scriptures nor Christ speaking in them claim to utter the truth without untruth, with Divine authority, even in such distinctively Biblical things as religion and morals; and then by overthrowing all the evidence adduced and adducible by which it is demonstrated that they do. When they do this they will be free and bound to assert that the Bible teaches nothing, but is really an unintelligible riddle, meaning the opposite of what it states—a solemn mockery of serious men in the gravest things, and that it has failed in the very purpose for which God inspired it.

THE FOLLY OF STANDING ON ABSOLUTE INERRANCY.

When this, then, is the real meaning and ultimate issue of all these anti-scriptural theories, how foolish and perilous to fight the great battle on the narrow, negative ground of absolute inerrancy, where one is by the terms of the controversy compelled to be only and ever on the defensive, exposing your whole line at countless points to the united assault of the foe, and staking Christianity, or making Christianity pay with its life on the issue—even the apparent issue—of one successful, or even seemingly successful assault at one point! How infinitely better and stronger to show, as above, that the now opposing theories not merely deny absolute inerrancy, but assert indefinite and

illimitable erroneousness, and necessarily issue in a denial of the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of both Scripture and of Christ, even in religion and ethics,—which are the peculiar purpose and sphere of Revelation, and the special function of Christ to teach: and, then, on this broad general ground, to assail their most assailable position along the whole line; and laying the main weight of the attack upon its weakest part, where it asserts the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture and of Christ, even in ethics and religion,—easily overthrow the whole opposing position; and leave the whole weight of the argument for the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture unassailed and unassailable by any who own the truth and authority of Scripture, or of Christ in their teaching on religion and morality. For, whatever may be said in answer to the contention that the Bible claims absolute inerrancy in every kind of thing, statement, item, and detail, the evidence adduced at least demonstrates that the theory of indefinite erroneousness is directly contrary to the whole tone, trend, substance, and explicit teaching of Scripture and of Christ, as is manifest by the slightest inspection of it; and it is decisive against every theory that approaches to denying the truthfulness, trustworthiness, or Divine authority of Scripture or of Christ.

BOOK V.

THE OPPOSING VIEWS STATED AND CONTRASTED
APOLOGETICALLY. THE APOLOGETIC POSI-
TIONS AND THE SCEPTICS' APOLOGY. THE
REPLY.



CHAPTER I.

*THE BIBLE CLAIMS TO BE TRUE, TRUST-
WORTHY, AND OF DIVINE AUTHORITY.
CHRIST ENDORSES THAT CLAIM, AND DE-
CLARES THE INVIOABILITY OF ALL SCRIP-
TURE.*

IN the previous chapters we have adduced the evidence of the Bible claim to truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority, —evidence so vast and varied, so decisive and ineluctable, that if the Bible teaches anything, it teaches that; and further, that Christ decisively endorses that claim, and most solemnly declares the inviolability of all Scripture. It has also been shown that, if the claim of Scripture itself is to be regarded, and the authority of Christ to be held decisive, this evidence demonstrates the falseness and untenableness of every theory of indefinite erroneousness; and it requires everyone who accepts the claim of Scripture and the authority of Christ, on this first and fundamental religious question, — which underlies and largely settles every other religious question,—to recognise at least the truth, reliability, and Divine authority of all Scripture.

THE ERRORISTS DENY THIS CLAIM, AND DECLARE THE POSITION
UNTENABLE APOLOGETICALLY.

So soon, however, as this is averred, and by the strongest evidence proved to be the claim of Scripture, endorsed and emphasised by Christ, we are met with a vast and vociferous array of assertions and asseverations that this is not true, though "the Truth" declared it; that it cannot be maintained in the light of the facts, though the alleged facts have yet to be produced and proved. So far as they have been presented they have mostly vanished, like dreams of the night before the beams of rising day, and revealed chiefly the mental opacity or strange misconceptions of those adducing them. And though most of these asseverations manifest an amazing innocence of the first elements of the question, we have received oracular assurance *ad nauseam* that to maintain what the Bible claims, and Christ declares, is vainly to take up an untenable position, foolishly to expose the truth to an easy assault with a speedy overthrow, and culpably to multiply sceptics and imperil Christianity, by maintaining a false and indefensible apologetic position. By a loud and prolonged chorus of such assertions has the Bible claim been assailed and sought to be set aside; and in no measured terms have the upholders of it been denounced as the worst foes of the faith, and the makers of infidels. Now despite all such oracular declarations of these would-be wise apologists, and in face of this assumed superiority of their position and methods of defence, we distinctly decline to have the truth of the Bible claim settled either by the assertions of sceptics or the assumptions of its rejectors.

THE ALLEGATION THAT IT MAKES SCEPTICS—AN EVASION
AND DELUSION.

Doubtless many of them would aver that it is not the Bible claim they reject, far less the authority of Christ; and they declare that it is the teaching of the inerrancy, or even the truthfulness, of Scripture that is mainly responsible for the scepticism of our day. But this is really an evasion, and actually a delusion. An evasion: for if the Bible does make any such claim, Christ endorses it; and they rejecting this, must reject

both it and Him. Nor can they evade or escape from these momentous issues, except by proving that Scripture makes no such claim, or that Christ does not sanction it; they are thus under obligation to disprove or nullify all the evidence by which both have been established. A delusion: for, as a matter of fact, the unbelief of our day is not based upon the difference between those holding stricter or laxer views on Inspiration, but is directed against those great fundamental Christian verities common to both, which all believers in Revelation are equally bound to maintain. It is notorious that the Christian faith is assailed, and rejected to-day, by those who do reject it, not on slight or trivial grounds, but because of those things which constitute its essence and are its roots and bases:—the existence and knowableness of God; the supernatural, miracle; the incarnation, resurrection, atonement of our Lord; the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the existence and operation of the Holy Spirit; the personality and power of the devil; the future life, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment; the doctrines of grace,—ay, the ethical and religious teaching of Scripture, with its Divine authenticity and authority—in short, everything distinctive of Revelation, with Revelation itself; and the person who is not aware of this knows little either of the literature, men, or opinion of our time. What the prevalent unbelief of our day rebels against and rejects is not merely, or at all specifically, the infallibility or truth of Scripture in everything, but its infallible or Divine authority in anything. Indeed it denies infallibility and authority as such anywhere; and boldly declares that the seat of authority in religion, as in everything else, is not in any book or Person outside of man, but in man himself; not in Scripture or in Christ, but in reason and conscience; not in revelation or in God, but in intuition and consciousness, in observation and experiment, in science and philosophy. How delusive, therefore, is the idea that prevalent scepticism is to any appreciable extent the product of any doctrine of Inspiration!

Nay more, the teachers of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, who profess, nevertheless, in some sense to hold (though what precisely and on what grounds, they never definitely tell) the veracity and authenticity of Scripture, do not themselves generally found their opposition to the Bible claim upon trivial

or unimportant things, but on large and substantial things that enter into the substance and are of the very essence of Revelation. Besides, errors in its moral and religious teaching are usually the first adduced, and most relied upon by the opponents of the Bible claim to support their theory of indefinite erroneousness, as proved above. Hence it is not only a delusion, but a deception to aver that it is the difference between themselves and the maintainers of a stricter doctrine of Inspiration, as to the smaller and less important matters of Scripture, that makes the latter responsible for creating sceptics. For the difference between them is in vital and fundamental things, extends to every kind of thing, even the most strictly moral and religious teaching, and enters into everything distinctive of Revelation.

MANY SCEPTICS MADE BY THE ERRORISTS TEACHING THE BIBLE'S ERRONEOUSNESS.

Yea, we may go further, and show that so far as sceptics are created by any views of Scripture apart from the prevalent grounds of unbelief mentioned above, they are largely and logically the outcome and effect of this very theory of indefinite erroneousness which our opponents contend for, and by which they innocently imagine they could most effectually arrest unbelief and defend Scripture. For, as has been proved above, and as will be enforced more fully below, their theory of indefinite erroneousness, by setting reason above Revelation and making man's own individual consciousness the standard and judge in the ultimate issue of what is true and what is false in Holy Writ, warrants every man in accepting or rejecting just as much or as little of it as he thinks fit, or none at all should he think best. It provides a principle for every man that permits and, if accepted, requires him to become a law and a revelation unto himself. Since various men of various races, in various ages, in different lands, conditions, and experiences, will, and do, and must differ in regard to such things,—yea, the same man often changing at divers times, in different circumstances,—it will follow as a simple logical necessity ultimately that this theory, which has deprived us of a truthful and Divinely authoritative Bible, has robbed us also of any standard at all, and left us each

to grope our way as best we may, bewildered by the sparks of our own kindling, and left us remorselessly at the mercy of a heartless and hopeless agnosticism. As a matter of simple and notorious fact, best known to those who are preaching the Word with a view to men's salvation, and who come most closely and largely into contact with earnest souls, the lowered views of Scripture and of its truthfulness, reliability, and Divine authority that have become prevalent, are undermining the faith of many, multiplying sceptics every day, and rendering appeals to Scripture as the Word of the Lord less powerful and quickening than they were wont to be. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, has in fact, by this vague, indefinite denying of its truth and Divine authority, been for many blunted and broken, instead of being, as it was wont to be, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." Consequently the price of a lowered and unsettling view of Scripture has been, and is being, paid for by the eternal loss of countless souls. A result this that may well make all earnest men, who wish the religious well-being and the eternal salvation of our generation, pause and ponder whether this proclamation of indefinite erroneousness, and this incessant arraignment of the truthfulness and Divine authority of God's Word, has not been carried much too far, and even to ruinous issues. Instead of forming our doctrine of Scripture from the supposed but mistaken necessities of Christian Apologetics, or conforming our conception of the teaching of Christ to the pretentious scrupulosities of those hovering self-complacently on the verge of incipient unbelief, or surrendering the claim of Scripture and the authority of Christ to the haughty demand of avowed infidelity, one would have thought that the first question to consider is whether this is the claim of Scripture, and the teaching of Christ; and if so, then it would be evident that it is not a theory of inspiration that is questioned and denied by the rejectors thereof, but the veracity and Divine origin of Scripture, and the authority and Divinity of Christ. These, by the prime necessities of their own position, every Christian and every believer in Revelation is precluded from impugning, but is bound to support and defend as much as the advocate of even absolute inerrancy.

THE ERRORISTS HAVE NEVER FACED OR ANSWERED THE
EVIDENCE FOR THE BIBLE CLAIM.

Further, if they deny that this claim to truthfulness and Divine authority is made by Scripture for itself and endorsed by Christ, then, it is incumbent on them, in the face of the evidence adduced and the challenge given, to prove this, and to answer all the evidence by which this has been established. This they have never done, nor ever really attempted to do, because they knew they *could* not. But if this were attempted, it would be found and felt that they are at least as much bound in reason to answer every argument, and to explain every item of evidence adduced in support and proof of this, as they hold us bound to answer their objections and explain their difficulties as to our view of the Bible claim. Yea, they are much more bound to do so, for ours is simply the embodiment of a vast array of direct, positive evidence from Scripture itself, supported by proper, weighty, and unanswerable collateral evidence from other sources, and strengthened by general considerations and other cogent arguments of the most sound and decisive character.

Theirs is at the utmost only indirect, inferential, and largely irrelevant,—consisting almost wholly of alleged discrepancies, unwarrantable inferences from fragmentary and often perverted phenomena,—outside objections, and frequently imaginary difficulties, easily explained and largely vanished. Such objections and difficulties are common more or less to all truths established in every sphere of knowledge, and might be especially expected in a Divine Revelation, communicated and transmitted as it has been to us in Holy Scripture. But they are not, and never should be, held as valid ground for rejecting or weakening the proper, positive evidence, far less as proof or evidence of the opposite.

EVERY ITEM OF THE POSITIVE EVIDENCE FOR THE BIBLE
CLAIM WEIGHTIER THAN ALL THEIR OBJECTIONS TO IT.

In any case, every item of the evidence and the argument for the Bible claim to truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority, constitutes a difficulty and an objection to their antagonistic theory. And since they insist on the upholders of

the Bible claim answering all their difficulties and objections before allowing the right to proclaim it as true, they, besides having to answer all the difficulties and objections peculiar to their theory, are, on their own principles, consistently bound to answer, which they never can, every objection, and remove every difficulty arising from the whole and ever-increasing evidence in support thereof, before they are entitled to say it is not true; for ours is all proper, positive evidence, *while theirs is not*.

Therefore, so long as a single item remains unanswered or unexplained, they are logically prohibited, on their own principle, from pronouncing it untrue or untenable. Nor are they consistently entitled to aver or imply that their own is true, or has any truth in it; nor even has it any right to have a word said in support of it, till our evidence is totally destroyed. While they have thus to answer every item of our biblical proof; yet, since they produce no explicit, positive Scripture proof for their theory, we are not required to answer any of their indirect difficulties or outside objections at all; seeing they profess to receive the Bible as a Revelation, and Christ as Divine, and as an authoritative Teacher.

THE ERRORISTS' ARGUMENTS ASSAIL EQUALLY THEIR OWN POSITION AND FAITH.

Besides, it might naturally have suggested itself to the dis-owners of the Bible claim, that a primary question was to ascertain and state precisely what the Scripture position really is; and how it could be defended,—whether the reasons for rejecting it were not mainly, as they are, misconceptions of it,—whether the arguments against it are not, as they are, mostly arguments not really against it distinctively at all, but against Scripture and Revelation altogether, or against its veracity, authenticity, and Divine origin, or similar things, which require to be maintained by all believers in Revelation in any true sense; and whether the things alleged against the true claim of Scripture could not be explained, removed, or answered, as they almost, if not altogether can.

Surely, too, it should have occurred to them what weakness and vulnerability their own theory of indefinite erroneousness introduces into the whole defence of Christianity, and of Revela-

tion in particular. Then it might probably have dawned upon them that in unwisely and unnecessarily giving up the true and impregnable position of truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority claimed in Scripture and endorsed by Christ, which has for centuries been so successfully defended against every assault, they were not abandoning a weaker position to assume a stronger, but abandoning a strong and safe position for one quite indefensible, or for none at all. For, as will appear more fully below, this is what it really comes to, on the principles, grounds, and admissions on which the Scripture position has been abandoned by those modern apologists, who claim to be the supremely wise and the only judicious defenders of the faith delivered once for all to the Saints.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTRASTED APOLOGETIC POSITIONS.

I. INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS AND ABSOLUTE INERRANCY COMPARED APOLOGETICALLY.

I HAVE put these two in comparison first, not because I commit myself to the latter view, nor even profess to understand it precisely, but because—*first*, it will serve some useful purposes to consider how this most advanced position, which has been so much villified by the assailants of the Bible claim, compares from an apologetic standpoint with their theory of indefinite erroneousness; *second*, because if this the most extreme position compares favourably as a position of defence with the other, when face to face with the foes of our faith, how much more *à fortiori* the less absolute and more guarded position of the Bible's thorough truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, and Divine authority.

THE INERRANTISTS' POSITION STATED THOUGH NOT ADOPTED.

Now all that the advocate of absolute inerrancy has logically to maintain is that every statement, fact, or reference in Scripture is true and inerrant, as originally given, and when properly interpreted in the sense intended, within the legitimate limits of the use of language and literary methods, in the light of ancient Oriental usage. Now in maintaining this position it is requisite, and only just, however much we may dislike it, or hesitate to accept it in all the absoluteness with which it is sometimes advocated, to apprehend precisely what it is; and not to misrepresent or caricature it; and thus to appear to give an easy refutation of it,—when, in truth, we have not really answered or

pondered it at all, but exposed only a caricature of our own imagination, as has been usually done by its rejectors.

I. NOT VERBAL DICTATION.

After the exposure of misrepresentations and caricatures given in Book III., it will suffice here to emphasise that the advocates of absolute inerrancy or perfect infallibility do not generally, as they certainly do not necessarily, require to hold what has been called the theory of verbal dictation. Although it has been regularly repudiated, and forms no part necessarily of their view, nevertheless most persistently but most unfairly has the theory been attributed to them, and most contemptuously have it and they been pilloried, by those who above all things seem anxious to evade meeting the real position, and to avoid facing the difficulties of their own theory.

2. NO THEORY OF THE MODE OF INSPIRATION OR THE METHOD OF PRODUCTION OF THE BIBLE.

The upholders of inerrancy do not and need not hold any particular view as to the mode of inspiration, or the method of producing the Bible. They would generally say that the first is irreverent—an unwarrantable and unprofitable attempt to fathom and comprehend that great mystery how the Infinite Spirit of God acts upon the free but finite spirit of man, so as to secure the Divinely-intended result—an absolutely infallible Bible.

The second, as to the method of production, or the mode of composition, they are free to hold as a legitimate and inviting subject of inquiry on the human side, provided the Divine agency or the theopneustia is not ignored or minimised, but duly recognised. Yet in the light of the ceaseless conflict of criticism and the perennial variations and vagaries of critics,—whose assurance is often equalled only by their contradictoriness or inconclusiveness,—they would regard much of the so-called critical results as exceedingly uncertain, and at best largely unproved if not improbable hypotheses, and often based upon untenable assumptions. All that it is needful for them to hold is that whoever the human authors were, and whatever may have been the method of production, or however the inspiring Spirit

may have wrought upon the human agents in producing Scripture, He did so work as to secure an infallible result, an inerrant Bible; and that He was so concerned Himself in the process, as to be and to make Himself responsible for the production in its entirety.

3. NO MECHANICAL THEORY OF INSPIRATION.

Nor would they need to maintain what has been contemptuously called the mechanical, as distinguished from the dynamical theory of Inspiration,—though what mechanical or dynamical can precisely mean in such matters, or how they are to be definitely distinguished, the users of these misleading phrases have never yet attempted to make plain. Certainly “mechanical” is quite inapplicable to those who, while maintaining the absolute inerrancy, also hold the perfect naturalness and harmony of all Scripture; and recognise as fully as their opponents the diversity of style, distinctness of thought, variety of expression, freedom of literary composition, and spontaneity in the inspired writers; and who believe they have found in the fulness of their Divine inspiration the secret both of their freedom and infallibility.

4. NOT EQUALITY IN VALUE OF ALL SCRIPTURE, THOUGH ALL TRUE.

Nor does the advocacy of inerrancy require or imply holding the equality in value of all parts of Holy Writ, as has so often falsely been averred. It does, indeed, require them to hold as true what the Bible declares, that all Scripture, being God-breathed, is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” but not that all parts of it are of equal value. In actual fact and in habitual conception, they hold them to be equally true and inerrant, but not equally important; and in this way only are they regarded by any intelligent upholder of inerrancy. Indeed, every simple-minded earnest Christian practically shows, by his use of some portions more than others, that while all is regarded as true, all is not regarded as of the same value or use in Christian life. On the contrary, they regard the Scriptures, and the Church has ever regarded them, as of almost infinitely diversified value,—just as

Creation is, though every part and particle of it is nevertheless the product of God. Yea, it is because they hold it to be all inspired of God, and therefore all inerrant, that they hold all to be of real though not of equal value ; which the others do not and cannot. They therefore, as taught by Christ, continue to search the Scriptures in all its parts ; and find them in every diverse part to be in their experience, in ever-widening scope, and ever-deepening conviction, of ever-growing spiritual profitability. This, they who hold its indefinite erroneousness do not and cannot hold without practically abandoning their own destructive, study-limiting, and experience-arresting theory.

5. NOT SCIENTIFIC ACCURACY OR LINGUISTIC PERFECTION.

Further, when they maintain its absolute inerrancy, they do not assert its scientific correctness, precision, accuracy, grammatical faultlessness, or linguistic perfection, as its opponents with amazing confusedness seem strangely to imagine and often allege. For such things as these some have found fault with Scripture, and others have fiercely assailed the upholders of its inerrancy. But it is a puerile and a fruitless triumph ; for these things its upholders never claimed, nor is its inerrancy in statements of fact or truth at all affected by such jejune puerilities, and despicable trivialities. For, as a book designed for all men in all ages, it is written in a simple, popular style, from earthly and human standpoints, for specific purposes, in a natural, phenomenal manner, as things would appear to the ordinary man. Therefore, scientific correctness it never professes, nor was designed to give. Precisian accuracy it never appears to aim at. Punctilious niceties it seems generally to disregard. And linguistic superiority or dialectic perfection it mostly purposely avoids ; and in doing so, its truthfulness, trustworthiness, and even inerrancy may remain intact. For things and facts may be as truly stated in popular as in scientific language. Practical and actual trueness may be as really attained without precisian accuracy as with it. While as for grammatical faultlessness, and linguistic excellence, they are merely matters of usage, taste, or opinion, which are of no importance, and have no bearing whatever on the truth or error of what is written.

6. NOR ABSOLUTE PERFECTION.

And when they maintain absolute inerrancy, they do not thereby claim absolute perfection, as has so persistently been alleged by their opponents. For a statement may be absolutely true without being absolutely perfect. It may be free from error without being free from imperfection. As shown above, imperfection and truthfulness are quite compatible. Nor is there any necessary or natural inconsistency between inerrancy and comparative imperfectness; as there is no contradiction between maturity and immaturity, fragmentariness and trueness, imperfectness and progressiveness; as there is no incompatibility but perfect harmony between the opening bud and the full-blown rose, the new moon and the full moon, the undeveloped infant, and the full-grown man.

Confusion of Imperfection with Erroneousness. Progressiveness postulates Imperfection but Trueness in earlier Stages.

The amazing confusion of relative imperfection with erroneousness has been a most fertile source of misconception and error in the whole question. So far is it from being true that imperfection and absolute inerrancy are inconsistent, that, on the contrary, the very reverse is the case. Paul says, "Not as though I had attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after." Progressiveness postulates imperfection, and development demands trueness and reliability in the elementary and progressive stages of life or revelation. Therefore, absolute inerrancy is in full and natural accord with relative imperfection. In fact, absolute perfectness does not and cannot exist either in life or Revelation—not in the creature, but only in the Creator. Divine truth can dwell perfectly only in the Divine mind; and must suffer more or less in coming into and through the at best imperfect media of human thought and language. Therefore, if we cannot have truth while there is imperfection, we cannot have truth at all. Scripture may therefore be entirely inerrant without being absolutely perfect, or while being largely imperfect.

7. NOT NECESSARILY OF THE RECEIVED CANON, OR TRANSLATIONS, OR VERSIONS, OR PRESENT MSS.

When its advocates predicate absolute inerrancy of Holy Scripture they do this not necessarily, as shown already, of all

the received Canonical Books, or of translations of any particular MSS., or of the original MSS. as we have them now, or of the best text made from the best MSS. It is predicated only of the Scripture as originally given, through the inspired writers, in the immediately inspired writings; and of those only when properly interpreted, and when the meaning intended by the inspiring Spirit has been truly ascertained from the true text, in the light of ancient Oriental usage, and within the reasonable limits of the use of language. So that the advocates of inerrancy are entirely freed of responsibility for many of those prejudicial things that have been wrongly attached to them. They are not even obliged to hold by all the books in the received Canon should one or more be shown by evidence to have no right to a place in Holy Scripture; or be proved to contain demonstrable errors, contrary to the trend, tone, and claim made by the Bible itself.

8. NOT TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION.

Further, they do not require to hold traditional interpretation, or to claim approval for many things in Scripture not intended to be approved by God, though recorded by Divine inspiration for gracious purposes. If anyone thinks the account of Adam and Eve in Paradise legendary and not historical, or the book of Job simply allegorical, and not historical or literally true history, but expressive of inspired and authoritative teaching as to the origin of man, evil, and the mystery of suffering, and thinks he can prove this to be the proper interpretation,—then, we may not agree with it, and may show that it is wrong or defective, and disregards the reasonable limits and natural meaning of language. But we are not, therefore, required or warranted to regard him as denying the truthfulness, trustworthiness, or Divine authority of Scripture, although we may think and show that his interpretation is forced and false. In some cases the evidence of this may be so clear and strong that we may be justified in saying that the natural meaning and reasonable limits of language preclude his interpretation; and that to so denaturalise Scripture, whether by rationalising or spiritualising—as has often been done from the time of Origen until now—is to play with Scripture, and make it mean anything, according to the idiosyncrasy or preconception of the interpreter. It, too, lays the Bible open to the

charge of misleading, if such interpretation were to be regarded as the true and intended sense. It would be nearly allied to its being untrue and untrustworthy, and therefore not possessing Divine authority. Nevertheless, this attitude and position is in itself to be essentially distinguished from the theory and attitude of those who deny the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture, and who teach or imply its indefinite erroneousness. It is necessary to say this much here, because the words true and historical have often been confounded as if identical; and frequently when men say that Scripture in some parts is untrue, they simply mean it is unhistorical,—which might be, and yet it might be perfectly true in the sense intended. All that has to be maintained is that every statement, reference, or allusion made in the Scriptures, as originally given, when properly interpreted, is true, and free from error in the sense intended. I say true and inerrant in the sense intended. I do not say necessarily historical. Frequently it is not historical. It often is allegorical, figurative, or symbolical, or it may be some other literary device, but yet true in the sense intended.

9. NOT IN TEXT MANIPULATION OR ISOLATION.

Nor are they required to hold that every separate part, text, or expression of Scripture is in itself, in isolation, apart from its context, and from the other parts of Scripture to be regarded as absolutely inerrant. Proper interpretation repudiates such disintegration of Scripture, and requires Scripture to be regarded as a living organic whole—a true, complex spiritual unity. It requires also that texts should not thus be severed from their context,—that every particular passage should be studied in its environment and purpose in the whole. Every part must be considered and understood in its place and connections; and individual passages interpreted in the light of the whole, especially the earlier parts in the light of the later, higher, and more perfect Revelations. The position of the inerrantist is that all Scripture and every part and particle of it, as originally given, when truly ascertained and properly interpreted, in the sense intended, is absolutely inerrant. And the question now to be discussed is whether that position is weaker or stronger, wiser or unwiser apologetically—more capable

of defence and more powerful in attack, in facing the sceptic, than the position of indefinite erroneousness.

THE COMPARISON APOLOGETICALLY.

Now in comparing the two positions apologetically, to discover their comparative apologetic strength or weakness, what strikes one *first* is the unwisdom, if not the unwarrantableness, of attempting to settle the question of the truth or error of the opposing theories in this way, instead of determining the question by its proper evidence—the teaching and the claim of Scripture itself. For to every one who believes that God speaks in the Bible that must ever be the direct, proper, and decisive evidence. And to every one who recognises that what is true is strongest apologetically, it will certainly be the best apologetic. Besides, what is weak or strong in apologetics changes often, so that what appears strong and decisive in one case or time seems inconclusive, unsafe, and less strong in another.

(I.) THE APPARENT STRENGTH BUT INTRINSIC WEAKNESS OF THE ERRORISTS' POSITION.

But as we have here to deal not with the truth, but with the comparative defensive strength of the contending theories, and as this has an indirect bearing on the previous question, and is corroborative of the true view and our main position, the *second* thing that is forced upon us, as we examine the question closely, is that the assumed but vaunted strength apologetically of the opposing theory is more apparent than real, even when compared with the extremest view. The longer and more deeply we have pondered and penetrated the question, the more impressed have we been with the comparative weakness and intrinsic indefensibleness of that theory. At first sight it seems plausible, and has doubtless impressed many who have not thought the question through, and led others to hesitate who have not weighed the difficulties of the errorists' view. To say, as the opponents of inerrancy do, that it exposes Christianity to an assault along the whole line, and allows the foe to enter the citadel, or to penetrate to the centre at countless vulnerable points, makes a plausible impression on many. For, as alleged, the assailant of the Christian faith has only to make out *one* demon-

strable error in Scripture, in order to overthrow the Christian faith. It is urged as surely perilous in the extreme to stake Christianity on such a narrow point, and to make it pay with its life, if a single error is proved. Yea, to reduce it to its lowest point, it makes the truth of the Christian religion dependent upon whether the foes of the faith can make out *one probable error* in the Bible. For according to the probability of the one is the improbability of the other. Now, however much there may be in some aspects of this to make extremists ponder, and whatever may lie in this line that all upholders of the truth and authority of Scripture should face, meet, and answer, it is but fair, and, in passing to examine the opposing theory, sufficient, at present, to say—*first*, that some of the ablest defenders of inerrancy distinctly decline to stake the truth of the Christian faith upon this question ; *second*, they emphatically deny, and definitely undertake to prove, that this is not the real state of the question.

THE *PRIMA FACIE* WEAKNESS OF THE ERRORISTS' POSITION.

But in proceeding to examine the opposing view—indefinite erroneousness—which vaunts with a supreme if not contemptuous self-complacency its superiority in apologetic defence to the position of inerrancy—one is at once struck, *not* with the strength, but with the weakness, vulnerableness, and indefensibleness of such a position. Why, the very idea that a theory which teaches the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture is a strong position from which to defend the religion of the Bible from the assault of the sceptic, appears, at the outset and on the face of it, a startling and a very peculiar conception ! What an amazing idea to suppose that to maintain, or admit and proclaim, that the Bible is indefinitely erroneous would commend it to its rejector, or prevent him from successfully assailing it ! Why, its supposed erroneousness is the very reason of his rejection of it, and the ground of his assault on it. And that the admission or assertion of this by its defenders—*i.e.* agreement with him in this—could induce him to believe it, or strengthen any defence of it against his attacks on it, seems a strange imagination. To admit and still more to teach the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, is to give the sceptic what he wishes, and to confirm him in his unbelief. To suppose that this would either silence

or convince him, or strengthen the defence of the Christian faith against him, is a hallucination so amazing as to be explicable only by supposing that the teachers of it never clearly set before themselves what their theory really and necessarily involves.

They have been so impressed by the supposed weakness of the inerrantists' position, as to have scarcely considered the weakness of their own. They have been so concerned about constraining the upholders of infallibility to abandon their position, as to have shown little concern, and have arrived at no conclusion, as to what they could put in its stead. They have been so occupied in decrying the danger of inerrancy, and declaring its apologetic untenableness, as to have considered little the danger of thereby proclaiming the opposite, and of disclosing the obvious untenableness of the position of indefinite erroneousness, when face to face with the sceptic. They have thus not reflected how easily and resistlessly he could from that position assail and destroy the whole structure and basis of the Christian faith. Indeed, they have been so used to contend in this matter only against their stricter brethren, and so wont to take up simply a negative position in assailing inerrancy, as to have never apparently thought of how the sceptic would, on their own principles, storm them from their own position, and pulverise them by their own weapons,—by simply translating their negative into its corresponding positive, and then applying their destructive doctrine by a remorseless logic to the unsettlement and overthrow of everything distinctive of the Christian faith. For to deny the inerrancy of Scripture as they deny it, is to declare its erroneousness; and to proclaim as they do its innumerable errors in all kinds of things, is to teach obtrusively its indefinite erroneousness and its illimitable unreliability. And when that is taught, it requires but little sceptical acumen to show that a book indefinitely erroneous and illimitably unreliable, cannot be a seat of Divine authority in religion, or a rule of faith and duty, or a trustworthy source of supernatural revelation.

IT PUTS WEAPONS AND PRINCIPLES INTO THE SCEPTIC'S HANDS
WITH WHICH HE MAY ASSAIL AND OVERTHROW THE CHRIS-
TIAN FAITH.

I presume there are few intelligent Christian apologists who, if they thought of it, would feel particularly comfortable in

entering into controversy with an astute sceptic, on the truth and Divine origin of the Christian religion, by declaring at the outset, as part of their teaching, that there were errors, innumerable and illimitable, in the Bible. Who would feel specially strengthened for their defence of the faith by such a declaration? On the contrary, I imagine that most capable apologists would feel not helped but handicapped by such a preliminary proclamation, and would prefer *not* to make it unless required. Many would feel it to be at least a rather awkward start of the debate, which they would suspect might lead to further disadvantages. Some of the shrewdest would probably have serious misgivings as to whither this might lead, and where it might end in the hands of an able antagonist. And not a few of the ablest and wisest would feel uneasy as to whether the skilful, and not over-scrupulous foe, might not through such a paraded opening, make his way much farther than was anticipated, if not into the citadel, and even destroy the foundations of Christianity, or at least appear to make out such a plausible case as would throw the whole question of Scripture—the only source of the Christian faith—into such confusion or uncertainty as to excuse or justify agnosticism.

THE SCEPTIC'S QUESTIONS AND APOLOGY. FIRST STAGE.

For even at this stage the clever sceptic can ask such awkward questions, and press such difficult points, and urge such cogent reasons as these:—"If, as you allege, there are errors in the Bible in some things, why not in others—why not in all? If it has erred in an indefinite number of things, why should I believe it in others, or be asked to receive it as true in anything? And even were I disposed to believe it true and right in some things, how am I to distinguish between the false and the true? On what principle and by what means can I separate the wheat from the chaff in the Bible? Then how can I be *sure* that I am right in my selection? On what valid ground can I base my distinction? By what infallible test can I ascertain what I am to believe? How can I infallibly eliminate the truth from the error, so as to be inerrantly certain that I have found the truth—the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Further, has not the Church all along understood the Bible to be true and right? Has it not been supposed by every section of the Christian

Church to be infallible and of Divine authority—the Word of God? Do not the creeds of Christendom teach this? Has the Spirit promised by Christ to the Church to lead them into all truth, then, misled it in this primary and vital question as to the character of the records of its faith—in regard to the source and basis of Christianity?

“Besides, is not this the impression the Bible itself naturally makes on every simple, earnest reader? Does it not seem to claim to speak the truth, and nothing but the truth, and that, too, in the name of God? Are not many of these very passages in which you allege there are errors, neither few nor small, prefaced by a ‘Thus saith the Lord’? and does not this tone or claim more or less pervade the whole? And if it leaves a false impression, and thereby misleads,—as it certainly has misled,—in this first and radical matter, the plain man, who earnestly and with open mind comes to it for light and life, how can it be a Divine Revelation, or of Divine origin? Can God lie or mislead the earnest seeker after truth, the sincere and anxious soul? How can straight and earnest men believe it and rely on it in anything, if, indeed, it has misled them in this?

“Further still, does the Bible itself give any clear warrant for any such distinction as that it is true and right in some parts and things, while false and wrong in others? And if it does not, as it surely does not, what right have you to make it? On what ground do you make it? By what principle do you make it? Is it not on the principle of Rationalism,—individual selection by each mind,—which at bottom, and in its ultimate issue, is antagonistic to Revelation, and destructive of it? Nay, more, is not this whole theory about Scripture an afterthought necessitated by the exigencies of the controversy, and a testimony to the force of the infidel attack? Is this not an evidence of the inherent weakness of what you consider the strongest Christian apologetic? Does it not imply the indefensibleness of the Christian Revelation from that standpoint, on that your best basis, when it has to resort to a Rationalistic principle which is essentially antagonistic to the supremacy of Revelation, and implies the supremacy of Reason in the ultimate issue?

“In any case, is not the whole question thus thrown into confusion and uncertainty? Are not the views taken from the Bible on this principle so diverse, and often so contradictory, as

to warrant men in not troubling themselves much about its supposed revelation? Is not scepticism justified in rejecting it, or at least in regarding the truth or falsehood of it as a matter of doubtful disputation? Surely agnosticism, at least, in this as in so many other matters, is neither unreasonable nor unwise? Yea, is it not right, inevitable, and obligatory in every man of intellectual honesty and moral integrity?"

These, and suchlike, are the questions that not only the sceptic, but the plain man and the perplexed truth-seeker naturally put and are constrained to put, to the errorists.

These are the kinds of questions that their assertion of Scripture errancy and erroneousness necessarily raise, and of which perplexed men have a right to demand a thorough solution. And these, precisely these, are the questions that these theorists have not answered, nor seriously attempted to answer; although they are both logically and morally bound to do so, when unsettling the faith of the truth-seeker, and boasting of a superior apologetic position.

THE FORCE OF THE SCEPTIC'S APOLOGY IS IMMENSELY INCREASED BY THE INDEFINITENESS AND ILLIMITABLENESS OF THE ERRONEOUSNESS AS URGED.

All this is immensely increased when not only the existence, but the prevalence of errors in Scripture is proclaimed,—when not merely is inerrancy denied, but indefinite erroneousness and illimitable untrustworthiness is asserted, as is now generally done, by the opponents of the Bible claim. That this is now generally done by them any reader of current theological and religious literature knows and can see, and has doubtless been often struck with, if not pained by. It can be found *ad nauseum* in many of our current reviews, both theological and general; in periodicals, both religious and secular; in articles, letters, reports, or scraps of sermons in religious weeklies; and even in leading secular newspapers, and in many of the recent books and reviews of them bearing on or referring to the question.

True, the expression "indefinite erroneousness" may not literally occur often, but what it accurately and positively conveys does occur superabundantly in general assertions, sweeping

statements, specific examples given at random, and pervading assumptions and implications.¹

Besides this, the denials of inerrancy—which, put positively, are simply assertions of erroneousness—are so made with such generality and indefiniteness, without limitation or specification, as, from the very nature of the case, to exclude any sure principle of infallible limitation of error, and to preclude the possibility of inerrant specification of any things or *kinds* of things distinctive of Revelation, in which Scripture can, with absolute certainty, be regarded as infallibly true and of Divine authority. So that the denial of inerrancy being so indefinite, unlimited, and illimitable, the erroneousness is so also.

Therefore, all that is urged above to show the apologetic weakness of the position that there are some errors in Scripture, without specification or how they can be certainly ascertained, presses with much greater force against the theory of indefinite and illimitable erroneousness.

The sceptic can urge with vastly augmented cogency the unanswered and unanswerable questions above, which threaten so seriously, if not render untenable and practically powerless, the apologetic position of those who allege errors in Scripture,—especially as no two of them agree, or can agree, or state what precisely those errors are. He can also easily press the idea and principle of indefinite and illimitable erroneousness so powerfully as to render the Bible practically useless and unauthoritative as a standard of faith or rule of life. And he can from that basis argue irresistibly against its being, with the authority of God, binding on the conscience of any man,—if not demonstrate that on this view unbelief is no sin, and agnosticism the position of reason, wisdom, and duty.

HOW CAN AN INDEFINITELY ERRONEOUS BIBLE BE MADE A RULE OF FAITH AND LIFE, OR BE BOUND UPON THE CONSCIENCE WITH THE AUTHORITY OF GOD?

For of what real practical use can any religious book be that is believed to be indefinitely erroneous? Is it to be wondered

¹ See among many, Ladd's *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, Farrar's *Interpretation of Scripture*, Horton's *Inspiration and the Bible*, Warrington's *The Inspiration of Scripture*.

at if men have little regard for, and pay little or no heed to, a book so regarded? How can it be of much use to a man if he is told it is, and he believes it to be, indefinitely erroneous, and is left without any sure and authoritative means of ascertaining what in it is false and what true, or of being certain of anything peculiar to it being true and of Divine authority? How can it reasonably be regarded as a standard of faith or a rule of life? Does not the very idea of a standard postulate truth and trustworthiness, and preclude indefinite erroneousness? And when it is a standard in matters of religious faith, are not truth and reliability obviously prime and urgent necessities? Is not the very conception of a rule of life quite inconsistent with indefinite erroneousness in what is made the rule? How can it be reasonable or possible to believe or be ruled by a book that is held, or believed to be indefinitely erroneous? Is it not a manifest necessity of believing it, or believing anything in it, to ascertain and to be sure in what precisely it is and is not inerrant and trustworthy? Is it not self-evident that belief of the Bible or of any book, or of anything therein, is necessarily inconsistent with any theory of indefinite and illimitable erroneousness? How can it be right or possible to bind on the conscience, in the name of God, what is held to be indefinitely erroneous and wrong, or even matter of doubtful disputation? Is it not as manifestly wrong to attempt to do it as it is morally and mentally impossible to do it?

IS NOT AGNOSTICISM REASONABLE AND REQUISITE?

Why should disbelief of such a book and rejection of its religion, its Christ, and its God, be a sin? Does not the very indefiniteness of its erroneousness and the illimitableness of its untrustworthiness excuse, warrant, and necessitate this? Nay, more, is not agnosticism in such a case justified by reason and required by prudence? Or at least, surely there is little ground for fault in outsiders not regarding it as of Divine origin or authority, or giving any weight or heed to it, until the upholders of it have, on unquestionable grounds, definitely ascertained and specifically set forth in what things and kinds of things, peculiar to it, men can be sure it is inerrant? But in the very doing of this the stultifying and untenable position of indefinite errone-

ousness is, and must be abandoned. Were it merely in some specific and trivial things and kinds of things that absolute inerrancy was denied, and errancy and error asserted ; and were the Bible doctrine of its truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority declared in its scriptural generality,—a tenable and even a strong, although I do not think the strongest, position might be found ; and some fairly satisfactory, or not entirely unsatisfactory, or at least possible if not probable explanation of these exceptional trivialities might be forthcoming.

But when indefinite erroneousness is alleged, implied, and proclaimed, and becomes the principle assumed and proceeded on, the whole position is exposed and becomes assailable at innumerable vulnerable points, and the very citadel is left defenceless, at the mercy of the skilful foe.

EACH INDIVIDUAL VARYING CONSCIOUSNESS BECOMES JUDGE
AND STANDARD, AND THE INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY OF
GOD'S WORD IS NULLIFIED.

Every individual must at best or worst discover for himself what in Scripture is supposed to be inerrant, reliable, and of Divine authority,—if on such a theory anything can be properly supposed to be so. Then after he has found it, as he fancies, he finds, if he examine the matter closely and probe it to its roots, that on this essentially rationalistic principle he really has no higher authority for it than his own consciousness. Even in that he may be mistaken, as men often are,—to say nothing of the mystery as to how this consciousness has come to him, and what authority or reliability belongs to it. But scarcely has he made this discovery till he finds that another's consciousness does not agree with or differs materially from his—or even contradicts it. And since one man's consciousness cannot be an authority to another, and since on this principle there can be no independent outside Divine authority in the Bible, it thus becomes impossible to settle authoritatively what is infallibly true, or absolutely trustworthy, or of Divine authority in Scripture. In the ultimate issue it is found that the only things on which, on this principle, men come generally to agree, are those simple and primitive intuitions and convictions of an ethical and religious character which are no distinctive element of Christi-

anity or Revelation at all, but the common moral and religious possession and inheritance of mankind—essential elements in the constitution of the human soul. So that the theory of indefinite and illimitable erroneousness, which its advocates fancied would afford such a superior apologetic position for the defence of Christianity, is really proved to deprive us of any defensible position at all, and logically lands us outside the Bible, Christianity, and Revelation altogether.

THE CLIMAX OF WEAKNESS IS REACHED WHEN ERRONEOUSNESS IS ALLEGED OF THINGS RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL.

All this follows simply from the indefinite denial of inerrancy, and the assertion of indefinite erroneousness, without positively and explicitly asserting error in every kind of thing in Scripture. But the climax of manifest untenableness in this line is reached when not only is inerrancy unlimitedly denied, and indefinite erroneousness illimitably taught, but when errancy and actual error are positively asserted and explicitly exemplified in every kind of thing. It is not only said or implied that the Bible is not inerrant but erroneous indefinitely without limitation, but also expressly alleged, implied, and proclaimed that it is not inerrant in any kind of thing, but specifically erroneous, and has actually erred in every kind of thing. It avers that there is nothing, or no kind of thing peculiar to it, in which it is inerrant, or can be declared to be infallible, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. This, in the ways indicated above, is what is now most generally done, sometimes in express and even offensive terms, more frequently in the unquestioning, implied assumptions, postulated presuppositions; and most patently and decisively of all in the specific examples adduced, and the necessary implications of the whole tone, method, manner, and trend of handling and regarding the Word of God. This is equivalent to a distinct and definite declaration of the indefinite untruthfulness, and unlimited, yea illimitable untrustworthiness, and unauthoritativeness of Scripture in any kind of thing.

It is asserting not merely the errancy and erroneousness, but also the unlimited and illimitable erroneousness and untrustworthiness of Scripture in every kind of thing. For as a matter of fact no limit is specifically given, nor any distinct indication

that any precise limit exists, or if so, how it can be ascertained; and from the nature of the case any definite authoritative limitation is, on this thoroughly Rationalistic principle, manifestly impossible. Since the Bible is not in itself, and independently infallible, or free from error in any kind of thing, it follows necessarily that no Scripture limit is available or authoritative; and since there is no outside authority except the human consciousness, which as shown above is not, and cannot be infallible and authoritative,—it follows again that there is no kind of thing in Scripture of which, on this principle, infallible truth and Divine authority can be predicated with certainty; and, therefore, Scripture is not only indefinitely, but also illimitably erroneous, untrustworthy, and unauthoritative in every kind of thing. There is, therefore, no kind of thing peculiar to Scripture in which it is infallibly trustworthy, or of Divine authority. Since this is so it seems scarcely worth consideration whether this theory supplies a strong position for the defence of the Christian faith; for it provides no position at all, and, in fact, leaves nothing Christian to defend—nothing worth defending.

IMPOSSIBLE FROM SUCH A BIBLE TO MAKE A TRUSTWORTHY
RELIGION OR AN AUTHORITATIVE ETHIC.

Not to repeat the processes of reasoning available to the sceptic, by which the less open previous positions in this line have been shown to be hopelessly untenable and practically useless, and all of which hold with immeasurably increased force against this theory, and simply explode and pulverise it,—what on the principle of this theory *is* Christianity definitely and distinctively; and how can anything that might be supposed to be it, be defended? How is it possible from a Bible that is not inerrant, or infallible in any kind of thing, and, therefore, fallible and erroneous in every kind of thing,—and that, too, without limit, or the possibility of limitation,—to educe a definite, inerrant, and Divinely-authoritative Christianity? Is it not plainly impossible to construct out of such unlimitedly and illimitably erroneous and untrustworthy materials as the Holy Scriptures are alleged to be, a definitely true and Divinely-authoritative religion? Does not reliability and Divine authority in the product demand, require, and postulate the same in the materials from which it is

produced, of which it is composed? As the materials, so the structure, is surely a self-evident axiom of all things, specially of things religious and ethical. Therefore, on this theory, it is patently impossible to construct or conceive, far less to believe or practise, a definite, reliable, or authoritative Christianity.

THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH SUCH RESULTS WOULD NOT
FOLLOW.

Had the theory been, as it was to many a few years ago, that the Bible, though not absolutely infallible in everything, is inerrant and of Divine authority in all its teaching; then, though this is not free of difficulty, we might have drawn and formulated a Christianity, both definite in its nature and Divine in its authority, from a correct and complete interpretation and induction of all Scripture. Then its teaching, thus truly ascertained from the Scripture as originally given, or as near as we can get to that, when properly interpreted, would be the Christianity of the Bible. And since it teaches, if it teaches anything, its own truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority, as its first and fundamental truth—as the truth which underlies, and on which it bases all its other truths—the Bible's teaching as to itself would be held as true, and of Divine authority by all who owned the truth and authority of its teaching; and this would end the controversy, so far as they are concerned. Or had it been, as was wont to be until recently, that the Bible is infallible and of Divine authority in all matters of faith and life, then, though difficulties might arise as to what were matters of faith and life,—still, with such limitation distinctly expressed, we might come to an approximately true conception and expression of the Christian faith. Yea, it might without much difficulty be shown that every part of Scripture teaches something as to faith and duty; and, therefore, all avowing this belief would be bound to accept what it teaches in all things, which is what is maintained. Or had it been, as was a general belief a few years ago, that the Bible is infallible, and Divinely authoritative in all matters *affecting* faith and life, and, therefore, every holder of this would have to believe, and receive its teaching throughout,—for all of it affects faith or life in some way,—then, again, the evils of Rationalism could be avoided. For

if a man holds and avows that the Bible is infallible in ethics and religion, and in what affects these, then this limits, at least in avowal, errancy, or error to what is outside these, and to what in no way affects them ; and is a denial in explicit terms at least of indefinite erroneousness. And on that basis it can be shown as above,¹ that what the Bible itself claims and teaches (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16) is that all in it has some relation to faith and life, and directly or indirectly affects these ; and that there is nothing in it that does not in some way or other affect these,—that, in fact, it is because all and everything therein does so in some way or other, and has some bearing on the ethical and religious end for which the Bible was inspired of God, that it has received a place therein. Thus, from this basis one can strongly, if not irresistibly, reason for the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture as originally given, when truly interpreted, as God intended it. Certainly at least indefinite erroneousness, and encroachment can be conclusively arrested and precluded.

INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS NOW GENERALLY AVOWED. NO
DEFINITE CHRISTIANITY ASCERTAINABLE OR DEFENSIBLE.

But what is now generally averred and vociferously proclaimed by the opponents of the Bible claim, is that the Bible is not infallible but indefinitely erroneous and illimitably unreliable in its teaching,—that there is no kind of thing in which it is inerrant and Divinely authoritative,—that it is more or less erroneous and untrustworthy in every kind of thing,—that it is not inerrant, but erroneous in matters of faith and life as well as in other matters—these being generally singled out and most emphasised as the strongest evidence of erroneousness,—that it is as little an infallible standard or carries Divine authority in its ethical and religious teaching as in anything else,—that in these kinds of things it is as indefinitely and illimitably erroneous, misleading, and wrong as in other things. Then it is obviously impossible, from the very nature of the case, to construct or formulate from these uncertain and unreliable materials a definite, reliable, and inerrant conception of the Christian faith which would be infallibly true and of Divine authority. From a source so unreliable, even in the kinds of things it was specially designed

¹ See also Book VI.

to teach, and on a basis so erroneous in what it was its purpose to reveal, and out of materials so illimitably misleading and wrong in the very things they were given for, it is evidently not possible to arrive at a definitely true, really reliable, and Divinely-authoritative Christianity. So that on this theory we cannot know or ascertain what is the Christianity proposed to be defended. We are destitute of the very materials and indispensable conditions of ascertaining it. In short, we have no definite or truly ascertainable Christianity to defend. Therefore, to prate about strength of apologetic position in connection with such a theory seems little short of absurdity.

And even if something might be extracted by individuals, according to their respective idiosyncrasies and predispositions, from these untrustworthy and unauthoritative Scriptures which might be denominated Christianity, what would it be, and how could it be defended? It could only be the findings, and the formulation of the individual mind, made according to the character, preconceptions, and prejudices of every various, ever varying, and never inerrant man. It could have no authority over any other mind; even as the Bible from which he supposes he received some of his conceptions, or the germs of them that gave birth to his idea of Christianity, was, *ex hypothesi*, itself without any intrinsic, independent, or Divine authority. It must be destitute of any authority at all, except what each individual mind may chose to give to it. Scepticism scarcely requires to attack such a position, or to expose its apologetic weakness and practical worthlessness. It of itself discredits the sources, and destroys the foundation of the Christian faith. What is evolved, or educed from it is, on this theory, simply an individual Christianity, which on this principle will and must vary with every varying person, and can never be inerrant or authoritative to any one. The sceptic can make short work of such a theory and its fancied apologetic strength; for he has only to show the countless diverse and contradictory conceptions of Christianity in which such a theory logically ends, and to which such a principle must and does lead, as is well illustrated in the contrariety and contradictions between—say, Dr. Ladd and Dr. Martineau, Dr. Samuel Davidson and Dr. Horton, and all the vagaries of German and English Rationalism,¹ all based upon and

¹ See Hagenbach's *History of German Rationalism*, etc.

naturally flowing from the same common Rationalistic principle. A Christianity so fantastic and contradictory needs no refutation—it refutes itself. And for all the innumerable conflicting forms of the Christianity thus evolved from the consciousness of each, working on the erroneous and unreliable materials of Scripture, there is no higher authority than the individual consciousness, which is no authority at all. In each case they are really its creation, and have no better foundation than individual opinion. In fact, the principle of this theory is pure and simple rationalism. Scepticism has no need to refute it; for it is itself scepticism, and the root of all scepticism. Thus on this theory there is no definite or authoritative Christianity to defend, and no rational ground of defending what any individual might conceive to be it. So that to say or imagine that there is great, or any apologetic strength in such a position, reveals an amazing innocence, and requires an astounding credulity.

THE INTRINSIC WEAKNESS IN ALL THEORIES OF INDEFINITE
ERRONEOUSNESS—INDIVIDUAL OPINION—THE ULTIMATE
ISSUE.

Along this line there is also this formidable, if not fatal objection, from an apologetic point of view, to all theories of indefinite erroneousness,—even the least pronounced and most restricted of them,—that they have to maintain at once the two-fold and naturally antagonistic, if not mutually exclusive and contradictory, positions of indefinite erroneousness and illimitable unreliableness of Scripture on the one hand, and of infallible truthfulness and Divine authoritativeness somewhere on the other. At a glimpse it can be seen that this is not a very hopeful undertaking, in the face of an acute and skilful scepticism. It is evidently, at the very best, anything but a strong position. The more closely it is examined, the more its weakness and indefensibleness appear. It should not require a very powerful infidel attack to expose its pregnability and untenableness. A skilful scepticism might without much difficulty argue, if not prove unanswerably, that the two positions and principles were really inconsistent and contradictory, yea, naturally destructive of each other, when thoroughly and practically carried out, and applied specifically in detail. For since *all* the forms and phases given

above amount ultimately, more or less, to indefinite erroneousness, the sceptic might, with much plausibility and force, ask and argue, How can indefinite erroneousness consist and coexist in the one book with infallible truthfulness, unlimited unreliability with definite trustworthiness, illimitable unauthoritativeness with Divine authority? In the ultimate analysis the inevitable result of all these theories of indefinite erroneousness seems to be, that how much of the Bible shall be held as true or false, reliable or untrustworthy, becomes a matter of individual opinion, infinitely and indefinitely diversified and variable, from the simple want of any independent and infallible objective standard. The only authority that can on this principle attach to any part of Scripture, is simply the authority of the individual consciousness, which is no authority. Every man thus becomes when away from the authority of God speaking in His Word, in faith as in life, "Lord of himself that heritage of woe."

NOTE.—Dr. Westcott well says: "Much of the criticism of the present day seems to assume that there is some resting-place between the perfect truthfulness of Inspiration and the uncertainty of ordinary writing. . . . A subjective standard is erected, which, if once admitted, will be used as much to measure the doctrines as the facts of Scripture; and while many speculators boldly avow this, others are contented to admit the premises from which the conclusion necessarily follows."—*Elements of the Gospel Harmony*, pp. 111 and 131.

CHAPTER III.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT, AND THE SCEPTIC'S APOLOGY—SECOND AND THIRD STAGES.

APPEAL TO THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT OF NO AVAIL ON ERRORISTS' THEORY.

IT is of no real avail to bring in here, as many able and earnest Christian writers do, what has been well called the testimony of the Holy Spirit,—a phrase that holds a large place, and a truth that played an important part among the Reformers, and in the theology of the Reformation.¹ The testimony of the Spirit is a great fact. It is a veritable and verifiable reality, which those sceptics and agnostics who profess a supreme regard for fact and consciousness have to face, unless they are to ignore their own avowed principles. It was the recognition at length by the once sceptical scientist Mr. Romanes, of Oxford, that the facts of Christian experience, realised by the testimony of the Spirit, and attested by millions of the best and ablest men in the world in all ages, were as real and verifiable in the moral and spiritual sphere as any facts in the physical sphere,—which led him, as a scientist, and on the most strictly scientific grounds, to embrace, confess, and die in the Christian faith.² Were other scientists

¹ See Principal William Cunningham's *Lectures*, and *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, and Dr. William Robertson Smith's *The O.T. in the Jewish Church*.

² Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*. It is deeply interesting and profoundly significant to read this convinced scientist's and spirit-enlightened sceptic's refutation of the unsoundness of his own previous reasoning and sceptical writings against the Christian faith, and even against theism, when, in proof of the Bible revelation that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually dis-

and sceptics only to face the same sure facts of Christian experience, established by the best and strongest evidence, their scepticism also would surely vanish and be replaced by faith. The "reasonableness of Christianity" would appear to them, as to Locke, Romanes, and similar students of philosophy and of science in every age. The Westminster Assembly of divines has wisely expressed, in its Confession of Faith, the general view and matured opinion of Puritan and Reformed theology, on the testimony of the Spirit to the Bible as the Word of God, in these weighty words—

"We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the Holy Scripture, and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellences, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments by which it doth abundantly evidence itself *to be the Word of God*; yet, notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and Divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts."

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO THE BELIEVER
THROUGH THE BIBLE BEING RECEIVED AS THE WORD OF
GOD.

Nevertheless it is in vain that the assertors of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture appeal to the testimony of the Spirit, to extricate themselves from the weak and untenable position in which, by the necessities of their unscriptural theory, they have placed themselves. Besides all that has been already said in various ways from different standpoints, it must not be overlooked, but emphasised, that this testimony of the Spirit along with the Word, which gives to the believer the strongest persuasion of its Divine origin and truth, has been realised, not on the

cerned, he, in his spiritual blindness, and therefore unreasonable unbelief, not only reasoned against them, but most unscientifically denied their existence. But it reflects much credit on his intellectual honesty and moral sincerity, when he, having by the Spirit's illumination received the power of spiritual vision, acknowledged this profound change, and most scientifically recognised the facts of the Christian life and experience to be as real and as thoroughly accredited as any facts in material science, and drew therefrom the true and only scientific Christian conclusion.

view of its indefinite erroneousness, but on the supposition of its being true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the testimony of the Spirit, giving the full assurance of the Divine origin and truth of Scripture, could be realised on a presupposition of its indefinite erroneousness. It is not the man who reads it as a critic, sitting in judgment on what in it is true and what false,—which every one must do who holds indefinite erroneousness,—but the humble believer that receives it as the Word of the Lord, who has that testimony of the Spirit which gives him personal conviction and assurance of its truth and Divine origin, as Dr. Robertson Smith well shows,¹ and all observant men see. No doubt there is a certain self-evident, convincing power in the Bible over the minds of unspiritual, and even unbelieving and antagonistic men, convincing them oftentimes against their will; for the word of the Lord is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. But by the testimony of the Spirit is meant the impression of its divinity and truth made by the Holy Ghost through the Written Word on the mind and heart of the believer. This impression is made on them when receiving it as the Word of the Lord, and not when regarding it as an uncertain and unreliable conglomerate of error and truth which everyone must as a critic sift for himself, and receive as true only, as Coleridge and the moderns would say, “What in it finds him.” That, strictly speaking, is not what the Reformers and Puritans meant by the testimony of the Spirit with the Word in the believer’s heart, but simply, in another form, that Rationalistic and untenable theory of a Bible varying in its truth and authority as the varying opinion of every variable and never inerrant man. The falseness, worthlessness, and indefensibleness of this theory has been shown from many different standpoints, so that this resort to the testimony of the Spirit to bolster up this unscriptural theory is a vain device, and does just nothing to cover its intrinsic weakness or remove its fatal defects. For on its essential principle, the testimony of the Spirit in a true sense—which is a testimony to the believing soul through the Bible received as the Word of God—is, from the very nature of the case, impossible.

¹ *The O.T. in the Jewish Church*, and pamphlets.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT CANNOT BE GIVEN FOR MANY
ESSENTIAL PRIMARY TRUTHS OF REVELATION WHICH MUST
FIRST BE RECEIVED BY FAITH.

Further, the testimony of the Spirit cannot be adduced decisively and indisputably to establish or demonstrate the truth or reality of many of the truths and revelations distinctive of Christianity. Even if the faith or consciousness of the Church, as expressed, say, in the creeds of Christendom, is appealed to, that consciousness is at most only a *Church* consciousness, which cannot be said to be authoritative or decisive over those not sharing in that consciousness, or to be convincing or sufficient evidence to the sceptics, who disown that consciousness, and adduce plausible explanations of its origin through delusion in the passionate and enthusiastic imagination of the early Christian disciples working upon and idealising the materials and mysteries connected with Christ. Above all, that consciousness or faith itself was arrived at or produced by the Scriptures being received as true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, as is proved by the whole chain of Christian creeds, and the consensus of ancient Christian writers.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT AND THE CREEDS OF
CHRISTENDOM THE RESULT OF RECEIVING THE BIBLE AS
THE WORD OF GOD.

For, as a matter of historical fact, all the creeds of Christendom were produced on the supposition that the Bible was the Word of God, and were based on that belief; and the ancient Christian writings, both of the Fathers and the Churches, declare, with no uncertain voice, that all the Churches of Christ received the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God and the infallible rule of faith and life. Receiving them as of that character, and studying them in that aspect, the Church therefore assumed the attitude of faith as to all they taught, and regarded its own function as that of a simple interpreter of its meaning, and not a critic of its truth, or a judge of its authority,—the Church of Rome even, as well as the Reformed Churches, denominating, and regarding Holy Scripture as, the Word of God, as may be seen even in the decrees of the Council of Trent.

THE ROMISH AND THE REFORMED CHURCHES AGREE AS TO
THE TRUTH AND AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

Nor is this at all affected by the fact that the Romish and the Reformed Churches did not agree in all points as to the books that compose the sacred Canon,—the Romanists including the Apocrypha, while the Reformers excluded them ; nor because the Romanists placed tradition along with Scripture as a rule of faith and duty ; nor because the Church of Rome by the Pope claimed to be the infallible interpreter of both Scripture and tradition. For though the Church of Rome accepted the Apocryphal books as Scripture, she did not, on that account, impugn the infallible truth or Divine authority of the properly canonical books. On the contrary, it was because they were regarded as Holy Scripture that they were received as true and authoritative. It was because they were held to be inspired of God that they were received into the Canon. And although papists put tradition alongside of Scripture as a standard of faith and morals, they did not, therefore, dispute or disparage the truth and authority of Scripture. On the contrary, it was in order to give tradition a similar authority that they put it alongside of Scripture. In the ultimate resort, if either tradition or the Apocrypha appeared to contradict, or conflict with, or differ from the acknowledged canonical Scriptures, even Rome herself gave Scripture a unique place in matters of faith and morals. And though Rome claimed to be, through the Pope, the only infallible interpreter of both Scripture and tradition, yet her interpretation was supposed to be simply the true interpretation ; and the voice of the Pope was held to be infallible and authoritative because it was supposed to be the voice of God speaking in His Word through the supposed infallible interpretation. Therefore, by Rome as by Geneva, Holy Scripture was held to be the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority, and the authoritative standard of faith and duty.

Yea, as a matter of simple fact, whatever individuals in the Churches may have done, every Church of Christ till now, as witnessed by the confessions of faith, has received and regarded Scripture as the Word of God ; and no Church up to this hour has accepted as its faith the theory of indefinite erroneousness. Nay, every creed of Christendom precludes it. It is, in fact, a

theory of recent creation, really beginning about a century ago, and reaching its present boldness and portentousness in this country, in the last decade of a century hastening in its decay to its death. Therefore, whatever else the Churches of Christendom differed in, they agreed in this, that Scripture was the Word of God, and the infallible rule of faith and life.

Here I must correct an error prevalent in many books and writings on this question in recent times. It has been often asserted and assumed by those who depreciate Scripture, and by others who think we should not give quite the same place to Scripture as the Reformers did, that the reason why the Reformers gave such supremacy to Scripture was that they were confronted by the Church of Rome with the authority of the Pope; and that, therefore, they had to put in opposition to that, the authority of the Bible,—implying that the Pope and the Church of Rome deny the authority of Scripture. Many, of whom more might have been expected, have gone the length of saying that the expression, “the Word of God,” as applied to Scripture, dates from the Reformation! In regard to this last, it need only be said that it is an entire mistake. This expression or title, and its equivalents, is found in Scripture itself,¹ and can also be traced in unbroken succession in almost every leading Christian writer from Clemens Romanus to John Knox;—as anyone may satisfy himself, without plodding through the vast volumes of patristic literature, by reading such old and easily accessible works as Lardner’s *Credibility*, or Goode’s *Divine Rule of Faith and Practice*; and it is found even in the very decrees of the Council of Trent itself.

THE POWER OF THE POPE AND THE PROGRESS OF ROMANISM IS AIDED BY THE RATIONALISERS UNDERMINING THE TRUTH AND SUPREMACY OF SCRIPTURE.

As to the other it must be said—*First*, that if there was good reason at the Reformation for giving a supreme place to the Bible, as against the Pope, there is as much need now as ever; for never have the pretensions of Rome or the Pope been so high, nor the propaganda of Rome so active and successful as to-day;—especially in England and through the clergy of the

¹ See Appendix and Books I. and IV.

Church of England.¹ Nay, more, is it not largely because the Bible of Protestantism is being discredited and destroyed by avowedly Protestant critics and preachers, that Rome is making such startling progress ; since many Protestants are thus losing faith in the truth and Divine authority of the Bible ; and little or nothing definite and authoritative is placed against the claim of Rome, and the pretensions of the Pope. For infallible authority in religion and morals *will* have somewhere : and if they are told they cannot find it,—as they cannot on the theory of indefinite erroneousness—in the Bible, then they will seek it elsewhere, in the Pope himself, as Newman did, and countless others are doing now. For the last thing that observant and logical minds will do is to seek to find it in the only other source left—mere human Reason ; which reason itself, as well as all history and philosophy, demonstrates the folly of following as a sure guide, or submitting to as a trustworthy authority in religion.

But, *Second*—as a matter of fact, the Church of Rome, when claiming infallibility and supreme authority in religion and ethics, and the Pope when claiming them for himself, never denied the infallibility and authority of Scripture, but, on the contrary, asserted these. What he denied was that the Bible was the *only* authority—tradition being, according to Rome, also an authority. And what he claimed for himself as the earthly Head of the Church was and is, that he is the only infallible interpreter of the infallible book,—a book which, however, is regarded as infallibly true and Divinely authoritative, because it is the Word of God ; and which, because it is so, gives him, as its assumed interpreter, his supreme authority in faith and morals.

¹ A very large and ever-increasing number of them are avowed Romanisers, and openly conduct Romish services in the Protestant Established Churches, although they vowed and are paid to do the opposite. They denounce and deplore the glorious Reformation—the source of our civil and religious liberties and privileges—as the greatest curse that ever came on Christendom. In violation of their ordination vows they repudiate the truths which the Protestant Church of England, whose bread they eat, was established to uphold, and propagate the errors it was endowed, and they were ordained and are paid, to oppose. A dishonest Romanism, which boldly defies all power of Church or State to interfere. A state of things which involves our nation with it in guilt and peril ; and which demands that every Christian patriot and honest man should strive to terminate it forthwith, in the interests of true religion, public morals, Christian liberty, and national well-being.

Therefore, this testimony of the Spirit, to which the deprecators of an infallible Bible resort, to extricate them from the insuperable difficulties of their theory of indefinite erroneousness, and which is supposed to be given in the consciousness of the Church, cannot, on their principle, be experienced ; and has, as a matter of fact, been received, so far as that consciousness has been expressed in the creeds of Christendom, on the opposite theory—through receiving the Bible as the Word of God, and the infallible standard of faith and duty.

SCEPTICISM CAN URGE ITS APOLOGY AGAINST THE ALLEGED
CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE CHURCH FROM THE CONFLICTS
AND CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN THE CHURCHES AND THE
CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM.

But even if that consciousness could have been received, on their theory, it would only at best be a *Church* consciousness, which could not constrain the faith or silence the objections of scepticism ; were it only because that consciousness is not uniform but often the reverse—yea, by no means beyond dispute in many things distinctive of the Christian faith. On the contrary, the sceptic knows—and can, through his knowledge, powerfully press his argument against this alleged testimony of the Spirit in the consciousness of the Church, which is brought to the rescue of this theory in its extremity—that there is not only not uniformity but much diversity, yea, not a little contrariety, in this vaunted consciousness, as seen in the differences and even oppositions among the creeds of various Churches and various opposing schools of Christian criticism and theology. But, on this principle of indefinite erroneousness, there is no possibility of determining inerrantly and authoritatively which is the true ; for by the hypothesis all Scripture is not true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority ; but indefinitely untrue, untrustworthy, and unauthoritative. Therefore, it cannot be even appealed to in order to settle infallibly and authoritatively which is true and which false. So that this adduced consciousness of the Church is, in some things, not only not a universal or uniform consciousness, but an uncertain and even contradictory consciousness ; with no means or possibility, on this theory, of ascertaining and deciding which consciousness is true, by the Bible itself, or in

any other reliable and authoritative way. And surely the sceptic may say that agnosticism in the light of this is not only blameless and reasonable, but right and requisite. If the Bible is held to be infallibly true and Divinely authoritative, then the differences can be limited to the interpretation of Scripture; and that can usually be reduced to narrow limits and to unimportant matters, with the reserve power and means of settling even these, by discussion, or discovery, or both.

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THE CONFLICTS HAVE ARISEN CHIEFLY FROM NOT SUFFICIENTLY
RECOGNISING THE BIBLE CLAIM.

Hence, as a matter of fact, in the history of theological discussion, the heresies, errors, and differences in creeds that have appeared in the history of the Church are traceable more or less to departures from the standard of Scripture; and from failing to recognise fully, and to apply thoroughly, the infallible truth and Divine authority of the Bible—the teachers of error avowedly or unconsciously disowning it, or not thoroughly applying it in the determination of doctrinal questions. The deviations from the truth in creeds is traceable to this, or to violations of, or defections from, the proper principles and methods of Biblical interpretation. Hence, the early heretics either disowned the final authority of Holy Scripture or used mutilated Scriptures like Marcion's, or only parts of Scripture, or deferred to it only in some things or kind of things. This is precisely what many teachers of error of our day are doing;—such as the presumptuous preachers who use the N.T. to discredit the Old, though Christ endorsed the one and inspired the other; the Rationalistic critics, who exalt the prophetic books to discredit the historical, and to destroy the legislative and the Levitical; the Gospellers, who magnify the Gospels to disparage the Epistles, though the last are the highest and most perfected revelation. All these errorists, too, who profess to exalt the teaching of Jesus in order to depreciate the teaching of the inspired apostles;—of whose teaching Jesus Himself said it was not their teaching but the teaching of the Holy Spirit, whom He was to send to lead them into all truth, and to bring all things to their remembrance that He had uttered, and to enable them to understand, and to teach what He had not been able to teach, because of the hardness of

their hearts, and because they were not able to bear it. Their teaching, therefore, given as the Spirit gave them utterance, is, according to Christ, the last and final teaching of the Spirit of truth—the complement and perfection of His own. Besides this, in the Gospels we get only the records and conceptions of Jesus' teaching, which His disciples give us. Also the Perfectionists, who not only disown the O.T., but also the New up to Rom. vii. 29 ;! because it seems to them that the earlier part of that chapter and of the previous writings, appears to contradict their pet but antisciptural theory of perfection, which is contradicted by unanimous history and universal fact ; and which the subsequent writings of the N.T. as thoroughly repudiate as the previous Scriptures. All these and many others are the result of narrow, partial, one-sided, and so far false, erroneous, and fragmentary views of Scripture,—violations the same in kind, though varying in measure, motive, and effect. All disown, more or less, the infallible truth and Divine authority of God's Word, and violate the principles of proper interpretation.

Further, the many errors of the Church of Rome are directly traceable to her avowed assertion of the authority of tradition, and of the Church and Pope, and her denial of the *sole* supremacy of Scripture—and of the Reformation doctrine that the Bible is the only infallible and supreme rule of faith and life.

Then the Socinian, the Unitarian, the Humanitarian, and Arminian, the Sacramentarian and Tractarian, the Rationalist and the Ritschlian heresies and errors, are all more or less due to the same cause,—many of the errorists distinctly repudiating the authority of Holy Scripture, and maintaining the supremacy of Reason over Revelation ; while some, like those of old, destroy or set aside the Commandments and the Word of God by their traditions.

Even the minor doctrinal differences between the Calvinists and Arminians, Lutherans and Reformed Churches, and other minor divisions and controversies, as to government and worship, among parties in the same or various Churches, are largely traceable to the more or less strict adherence to the Scriptures as the standard of truth in all doctrinal or practical differences. So similarly, many of the prevalent errors of our times are accounted for by an avowed or unconscious but real disowning or not fully

recognising of the truth and authority of Scripture. In its place, and in opposition to its teaching, especially in direct antagonism to the most explicit and emphatic teaching of Christ as set forth therein, many largely put, consciously or unconsciously, their own feelings, imaginations, reasonings, and philosophies; and even when using Scripture pervert and modify or misuse it by their own prejudices and philosophies. This, which is simply the practical assertion of the supremacy of reason over the teaching of Scripture and of Christ, may be seen superabundantly in much false but prevalent teaching and preaching, referred to in Book I. All this arises from foolishly forsaking or not faithfully following the Word of the Lord, and then, walking in the light of their own eyes, losing themselves in wandering mazes.

THE PRIME REQUISITE AND ONLY EFFECTUAL MEANS FOR THE
UNITY OF THE FAITH IS TO UPHOLD THE TRUTHFULNESS
AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE PROPERLY INTER-
PRETED BY THE AID OF THE INSPIRING SPIRIT.

And the only thorough way to refute these errors, and to arrest these aberrations and tendencies, is to maintain and establish the infallible truth and Divine authority of Holy Scripture as the supreme rule of faith, and judge of controversies. Hence the deep, direct, and primary importance of the proof and establishment of the doctrine of Holy Scripture in itself and in its relation to all other questions in religion and ethics. The first essential thing for all and in all is the standard; and when it is once thoroughly settled, established, and recognised that the Bible is the standard; and when that standard is strictly adhered to, and its authority promptly owned and implicitly followed,—the limits of controversy as to its meaning, or the proper interpretation of that standard, are made narrow and confined to very minor matters. For there, too, the means of settlement are available, and the controversies terminable; whereas, on the opposite theory, the matters are both important and illimitable, and the controversies interminable.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS DOES NOT AVAIL DIRECTLY FOR SOME LEADING BIBLE TRUTHS.

Even in regard to leading vital doctrines of the Christian faith, the testimony of consciousness does not avail; as is proved from the very nature of some of these doctrines, and from the antagonisms and controversies of Christians in regard to them. Who does not know what long and bitter controversies there have been over the first great and fundamental section of Theology proper—the doctrine as to God and the Trinity? How long and deeply was the early Church agitated and distracted over the questions connected with the Persons of the Godhead, especially over the Divinity—the Divine-human Personality of Christ,—the true and Church doctrine of which many calling themselves Christians deny and reject even until now (Unitarians), as many have done all along (Arians, Semi-Arians, and Socinians), the vital difference being expressed by the difference of a single letter—"homoiousion" and "homousion." Is not Christendom till this hour rent into the Western and Eastern Churches over the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, the procession of the Spirit,—the difference that rent Christianity in twain being set forth in a single word (*filioque*)? From the very nature of all the doctrines in that high and mysterious region, must they not be, as they undoubtedly are, matters of pure revelation, to be received by faith, simply and solely on the testimony of God speaking in His Word? Here the testimony of the Spirit in the consciousness of believers has little or no place; except, indeed, that when we receive them simply as given in Scripture, and believe them solely on its authority, we may in course receive some impression and realisation of their truth and adaptation to our nature.

How numerous and prolonged have been the controversies in Anthropology,—the second great section of Theology,—contentions as to the original and fallen state of man, as to original sin, total depravity, imputation of guilt to Adam's posterity, free will, man's responsibility, moral inability, and spiritual death, and all connected therewith! These differences have not only led to the designation and the expulsion of heretics, many and diversified; but they have also created and per-

petuated divisions, and even antagonistic denominations in Christendom.

Coming to the third section,—Soteriology,—what oppositions and controversies have existed, and do exist, as to the grace of God and the work of Christ!—controversies gathering around such well-known terms as predestination, free grace, the covenants, election, redemption, the atonement, substitution, vicarious sacrifice, expiation, propitiation, reconciliation, imputation, effectual calling, regeneration, faith, justification, sanctification, the fatherhood of God, adoption, good works, perseverance in grace, perfection in holiness, sacerdotalism, and sacramentarianism, the Church and its officers, powers, and destiny. Around every one of these great controversies have raged, from which different sects and sections have sprung; and about which the keenest discussions and most persistent antagonisms gather and promise to perpetuate themselves.

And when we enter on the last section—Eschatology—we are met on every hand with differences and contrarieties as to death and its issues, the state of the soul after death, future retribution, purgatory, probation hereafter, restoration, annihilation, eternal hope or everlasting destruction, the second advent, the final judgment, heaven, hell, and the everlasting destinies. About these what countless conflicts have raged for ages, and still rage?

Thus the whole first section of theology, and largely the last, are beyond the region of consciousness, or the testimony of the Spirit in Christian consciousness. In the two remaining sections there are marked differences, and even contradictions, which are largely due to the conscious, or unconscious adoption more or less of the Rationalistic principle. In the light of all this, which traverses every section, and almost every leading doctrine in theology, it is futile to talk about the harmony, or uniformity of the testimony of the Spirit in the consciousness of the Church, as being capable of putting a really effectual arrest upon the abuse of the theory of indefinite erroneousness as applied to Holy Scripture. Therefore, this resort utterly fails to extricate the holders of it from the insuperable difficulties, interminable confusions, and innumerable absurdities, in which their theory lands them.

IT IS VALID CHIEFLY FOR THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE AND THE ASSURANCE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD.

In fact, the testimony of the Spirit in Christian consciousness, in corroboration of the truth of the peculiar doctrines of Revelation, is practically limited to the experimental part of what are called the doctrines of grace, and to the full assurance and strongest persuasion that the Bible is the Word of God, which is given to the consciousness of the believer by the Holy Spirit, through the knowledge of the truth of Scripture, and by its being received as the Word of God. In fact, on the rationalistic principle of the holders of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, it is impossible either to escape from the natural consequences of their theory, when facing the sceptic, or to have any testimony of the Spirit properly so called with which to make even a forlorn attempt to do so. Most of the doctrinal errors and antagonisms have largely arisen from, and been continued by, failing to adhere strictly to the Bible standard, and following the Rationalistic principle.

THE ACCEPTANCE OF SCRIPTURE AS THE TRUE AND AUTHORITY-
TATIVE STANDARD IS THE PRIME CONDITION AND ONLY
MEANS OF SETTLING ALL QUESTIONS IN RELIGION AND
ETHICS.

If, however, the Bible is thoroughly received, and implicitly followed as the authoritative because Divine standard, then the heresies and errors can be definitely ascertained, and authoritatively declared; and the controversies may be reduced to the narrowest limits. The means, too, exist and are available, in the infallible and authoritative standard, for the practical settlement of even these minor differences, or at least of an approachment thereunto. Instead of as in the opposing view, which raises such questions as, what in Scripture, distinctive of it, shall be received as true and authoritative, and how can this be infallibly ascertained and made authoritative on others, and what gives them any truth or authority,—with all the infinitude of insuperable difficulties, and interminable controversies, and disastrous issues arising therefrom,—the only question remaining on this view would be simply what is the meaning and proper interpretation of the

infallible and authoritative standard. Hence, as a matter of fact, the sections of the Christian Church that most strictly adhere, and most implicit submit to the Bible as the standard are just those sections whose doctrinal standards most closely agree and most nearly harmonise, such as the Confessions of the Reformed Churches, and the writings of the Reformers and Puritans. These manifest a practical agreement on almost every leading doctrine, and show in fact a substantial oneness and harmony,—even the slight differences being traceable to misinterpretations of, or deviations from, the standard of Scripture.

RÉSUMÉ AND THE SCEPTIC'S APOLOGY—SECOND STAGE.

Already in many various ways, and by strong and cogent reasons, which no devices can evade or resist the force of, have the weakness and untenableness apologetically of the theory of indefinite erroneousness been shown. But it is only when that theory is brought face to face with the claim of Scripture and the teaching of Christ, that its apologetic indefensibleness and tactical folly and practical fatality to the Christian faith become fully and directly manifest. For it is in direct and pointed contradiction to both. It has been shown above (Chap. IV.) by an amount and a quality of evidence unique and unparalleled, that the Bible, if it teaches anything, claims to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. It is also matter of patent and unquestionable fact, that the Bible makes this claim the foundation of all its other claims, and puts this as the basis on which it rests every other truth; and lays this claim of speaking the truth, and nothing but the truth, in the name and with the authority of God, as the ground on which it demands, and is entitled to demand and expect, the faith and obedience of men.

This being so, it is easy and inevitable for the sceptic to show that, on the theory of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, Christianity is indefensible, and the religion of the Bible false. For he has only to produce the evidence that the Bible does make this claim; and then to put opposite to that the theory of those professed acceptors of the Christian faith who declare that the Bible is indefinitely erroneous and unlimitedly untrustworthy, in order to make out a full and direct contradiction; and thus to demonstrate that the fundamental claim of Scripture, with all built

thereon, is false ; and the religion of which it is the source, therefore, a delusion or a fraud. Yea, if the evidence only amounts to, or looks like a *probability* that this is the claim of Scripture,—as every Christian Church, and every earnest, unsophisticated reader has felt and recognised from the impression naturally made by the simple reading of it,—then, if the theory of indefinite erroneousness and untrustworthiness is true, there is, in this direct and radical contradiction, valid and sufficient reason for the denial of the truth, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture in everything peculiar to it. It is deprived of intrinsic, independent, or Divine authority in anything. Therefore, there is clear and decisive ground to justify the rejection of the faith of which it is the source and basis ; or at least to warrant, if not to require, agnosticism. For the sceptic who does not, and does not wish to, believe the Bible, and who is only too ready to avail himself of any presentable reason, or plausible pretext for rejecting it and its religion, has only to turn to these theorists using their own principles and results to give them a crushing overthrow.

THE SCEPTIC'S APOLOGY—SECOND STAGE.

“You profess to believe the Christian faith ; and yet you tell me that the book from which you take it, and which is its source and basis, is indefinitely erroneous and untrustworthy, and cannot, therefore, be the Word of God, or carry Divine authority. For it is surely a first postulate of all religion and ethics, that God, the object of faith and worship, cannot deceive or lie, give error for truth, or present as trustworthy what is unreliable. Now, apart altogether from the difficulty, yea the impossibility, of inerrantly eliminating the truth from the error in such a conglomerate, and of educing with certitude an infallibly true and Divinely-authoritative standard of religion or morality from such a mixture of opposite elements, and apart also from the impossibility of forming a definite and infallible creed or ethic from an indefinitely erroneous and untrustworthy book,—while you say that the Bible is indefinitely erroneous and unlimitedly unreliable, I find others professing the Christian faith teaching that the Bible claims to be the Word of God, infallibly true, and carrying Divine authority. These, too, form by far the larger number, yea include every section of the Church from the

beginning, as expressed in every creed of Christendom,—the Westminster Confession of Faith, one of the latest and best, expressing well the common faith of the Christian Church in every age, in these clear and decisive words: ‘All which (the canonical books) are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life,’ and form the ‘Word of God written,’ ‘of infallible truth and Divine authority.’ So that if you are right they are wrong; and the Bible that misled them must be wrong also, or at least a misleading book. The Holy Spirit, too, which, according to it, Christ promised to His Church to lead it into all truth, has misled the apostles in the apprehension or expression of it, and the Church in the understanding and the interpretation of it,—or Christ’s promise has been falsified by the events. And surely a book that has thus misled men in this radical matter of its own truth, trustworthiness, and authority, on which every other truth in it is based, cannot be in any sense or part the Word of God. Certainly, at least, a sceptic should be free from blame, if not deserving of commendation, for disbelieving and disregarding an indefinitely erroneous book, which, if you are right, has misled men in its first and fundamental claim.

“Further, I find that the plain man has taken the same impression from the earnest and prayerful reading of the Bible as the Church, and that he, too, has been misled by its apparent tone and pervading claim to speak the truth, and that, too, in the name and with the authority of God. Surely a book that on your theory so misleads the earnest and prayerful seeker after truth is quite unfit to be an authority or guide in religion or morals; and it should be sternly set aside by every man who does not wish to be misled in what it concerns him most to know. Surely, at least, the sceptic who does so should be regarded as pre-eminently the prudent and consistent man.

“Still more, when I read the book for myself, as a piece of literary curiosity, simply with a view to ascertain its claim, I am bound to say that the impression made upon me is substantially the same as has been made on the plain man, and on the Church in all lands and ages. It does seem to claim, if anything can be learned from it, to be true, trustworthy, and to speak with God’s authority, without reservation or distinction of parts. Its pervading tone assumes this. Its whole trend implies this. Its express teaching declares this. Its very words in countless cases

proclaim this. The use made of it, too, and the manner of reference to it, by its most outstanding teachers and writers, seem unquestionably to require this. And nothing less than this appears to come up to the claim of the Bible, or to meet the requirements of honest interpretation.

“But since, as you say, and as your theory of indefinite erroneousness requires, this claim is contradicted by the facts, and cannot in the light of recent criticism be maintained, the fundamental and root doctrine of the Bible and of the Christian religion is false, if you are right; and everything founded thereon, which is everything peculiar to the so-called revelation, vanishes like the dreams and superstitions of so many other religions. The Bible is built on sand; and what has hitherto been supposed, as we sceptics always said, to be what Mr. Gladstone called ‘The impregnable rock of Holy Scripture,’ is, on your view and principles, impregnable no more. Its very foundations have been destroyed, and its every doctrine founded thereon has been undermined and found baseless. Weighed in the balances of right reason, and tested by the sure tests of modern criticism, it has been found wanting, as we always held. And we sceptics who reject both the book and its religion, are at length by yourselves amply vindicated in our contention, fully justified in our unbelief, and certainly more than warranted in our Agnosticism. But surely the only logical and consistent course for you is to follow our example and become sceptics too. Most of all when I examine the mass, the variety, and the character of the evidence in support of what appears to ordinary readers to be the claim of the Bible, adduced by those who maintain that claim, I am compelled to confess that, if the Bible can be said to teach anything, it seems to teach that. Beyond all question, this evidence looks as like a demonstration as anything of the kind can be—that the Bible does claim for itself truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority; and its whole tone, trend, explicit teaching, and pervading attitude are utterly inconsistent with indefinite erroneousness, preclude the very idea of untrustworthiness, and are simply inexplicable, except on the supposition that it claims to be the Word of God. In fact, in the light of the evidence it is safe to say that, if it does not claim and teach this, it is useless to inquire what it teaches, for nothing could be clearer, stronger, or more ineluctable. It teaches nothing else so

plainly, decisively, and pervasively; and it seems a strange inconsistency, and a patent absurdity, to seek to ascertain what it teaches on other things, when shutting the eyes to and disowning this claim, on which it bases all its teaching, and on which it grounds its right to teach at all.

“But since I don’t believe in the Bible, or revelation, or the supernatural, and since you assure me, by your theory of indefinite erroneousness, that this first and fundamental claim of the Bible is untenable, and contradicted by facts, and has been exploded by the claimed results of the ablest rationalistic critics, who on that account consistently repudiate revelation, and deny *in toto* the supernatural in the religion of the Bible or in the history of the world; and since the innumerable errors and contradictions, false teachings, hoary superstitions, revolting cruelties, and outrageous immoralities, which are not only recorded, but seemingly approved by God, and even apparently commended and commanded in the Bible, which you refer to in support of your theory, seem to make out a plausible case for it;—I, who am disposed on other grounds to reject the Bible, and to deny the supernatural altogether, feel relieved by your assurance, encouraged by your contention; and perhaps I should express my gratitude to you and your authoritative critics for so effectually confirming my scepticism, justifying my unbelief, knocking the bottom out of the Bible by exposing the falsehood of its fundamental claim; and warranting fully my rejection *in toto* of a Book which, according to you, is full of error, teems with superstition, is disfigured by immorality, is based upon imposture, and lies or misleads in its pervading tone, fundamental doctrine, and prime claim.

“I know, of course, that the errors and immoralities that you allege against it are largely the same as and similar to those charged against it in all ages by sceptics like myself, and that beyond some of the recent results of the rationalistic criticism there is very little indeed that may not be found more tartly expressed in the writings and speeches of such men as Celsus and Porphyry, Voltaire and Tom Paine, Holyoake and Bradlaugh, Huxley, Ingersoll, and Foote. But as these were the avowed opponents of Christianity their attacks were not held as of such weight, since they were supposed to be prejudiced assailants. But when you, the professed friends of the religion of the Bible,

with the powerful support of the rationalistic critics, who were the pioneers of the Higher Criticism, and the teachers of its ablest authorities, endorse and supplement their charges, we sceptics may surely take our ease and leave the work of destruction to its professed friends. Ay, we may revel in our unbelief, and see in imagination that fearless race of hated and pilloried infidels, who died amid the execrations of a benighted Christendom, rising from their dishonoured graves to sing a mocking requiem over the burial of an extinct Christianity, which was palmed off upon a credulous people by the imposture of an inspired Book, and the fiction of a Divine Revelation, and the delusion of an incarnate God, and the fable of a Risen Christ."

NO ESCAPE FOR ERRORISTS FROM SCEPTIC'S CONCLUSIONS SAVE
BY ABANDONING THEIR POSITION OR ANSWERING THE WHOLE
EVIDENCE FOR THE BIBLE CLAIM.

Nor can these errorists escape from these tremendous, but legitimate, and only logical issues of their theory, when its principles are powerfully pressed by a skilful sceptic to their ultimate conclusions, except by showing—what they have never even attempted to do—that the whole massive array of overwhelming evidence which, together with the impression made on every candid mind and upon the Church in all ages by the simple and careful reading of it, amounts to a demonstration that the Bible *does* claim to be the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and Divinely authoritative—is not a proof thereof, and does not amount even to a probability. For even if the whole made out only a bare probability that the Bible did claim this, it is fatal to their dream—that their theory gives them a strong, or even a tenable apologetic position. So far as it appears probable that this is the Bible claim, so far, if their theory of indefinite erroneousness is true, it is necessarily improbable that the Bible is true, so far it appears probable that the Bible is untrue, and therefore probable that the religion of the Bible is false. They have to overthrow, and to show that it is no evidence, every item and particle of proof that has been, or can be, adduced proving or making probable that this is the Bible claim. One single item not satisfactorily answered, favouring or rendering even probable that this is the claim of Scripture, is, with their theory, as fatal

to the defence of Christianity, and as destructive of its truth, as they allege one single error proved in Scripture is to the theory of the inerrantists, or to the defence of Christianity from that standpoint. For, since they teach the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, if one item of evidence, making even probable that the Bible claims to be true, trustworthy, and Divinely authoritative, remains unsatisfactorily disposed of, it is either destructive of Christianity or of their theory of Scripture.

The defence of Christianity is thus rendered not only not strong, but untenable, and even impossible from their standpoint. If in one particular item the evidence remains, or appears to make out even a probability, *that* is either a refutation of their theory, or, if it is true, it overthrows Christianity by destroying its fundamental claim, so long as one particle of probability in favour of that claim remains unanswered. For the contradiction in that case would be direct and full, and is, therefore, logically as conclusive as a million.

THE ERRORISTS ARE MORE BOUND TO ANSWER EVERY ITEM OF
THE EVIDENCE FOR THE BIBLE CLAIM THAN THE IN-
ERRANTISTS TO ANSWER THEIR ALLEGED ERRORS.

So that if their theory is not to destroy the foundation of the Christian faith, they are as much bound to answer every item of the evidence in favour of the infallibility and Divine authority of Scripture, and to show that it is not in favour thereof, as they allege the upholders of inerrancy are bound, in order to evade a similar result, to refute or account for even an alleged or apparent error in Scripture. Their contention is that the inerrantists expose the defences of Christianity to an easy assault and speedy overthrow by making Christianity pay with its life for a single apparent error or discrepancy found in Scripture ; and they allege that all the unbelieving foe has to do, on that view, in order to destroy the Christian faith, is to produce one case of this. The wiser inerrantists do not admit that this is the real state of the question, and the ablest of them distinctly repudiate this definite staking of Christianity on this doctrine, and at the utmost would only admit that such apparent errors or discrepancies only constitute an objection or difficulty to their doctrine which they do not think it impossible or even difficult to

answer or account for ; and the errorists have yet to prove that theirs is the true statement of the case. No theologian ever was more able to see or state the question (*status questionis*), on this or any theological subject, with more clearness and force than Dr. William Cunningham, and he distinctly refuses to accept that as the true state of the question ; so also does Dr. Paton of Princeton.

ERRORISTS' ALLEGATION OF ONE ERROR IN SCRIPTURE, WHILE
ONE ITEM OF EVIDENCE FOR INERRANCY REMAINS, MORE
IMPERILS CHRISTIANITY THAN INERRANTISTS' VIEW.

But even were it true, as they assert, their own theory puts them in a similar, yea, even a worse position, apologetically. For so long as a single item of evidence favouring inerrancy remains unanswered or undisposed of, or even the more guarded position of definite truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority, their assertion that the Scripture is indefinitely erroneous is at least equally fatal to what appears to be, by that evidence, the fundamental claim of Scripture, and is therefore equally destructive of the truth and basis of the Christian faith. Yea, even the allegation of a single error in Scripture, so long as a single particle of evidence remains unanswered that appears to favour inerrancy, is at least as destructive of the fundamental claim of the source and basis of the Christian faith as the assertion of inerrancy, in face of an apparent error, can be, because one item of evidence favouring inerrancy is surely at least equal to one apparent error in support of errancy ! It is really of much more weight than many apparent errors or discrepancies, for it is direct and positive,—the only proper evidence,—while the other is not proper evidence at all, but only such difficulties and objections against the proper positive evidence as is often connected with the best established truths in almost every region of thought and discovery,—and in this case they are less difficult of explanation. So that without saying anything further about the inerrantist's claim, even on the extremest view, and on this narrowest point, and even granting the errorists the advantage of denied and untenable suppositions, the balance of the argument lies clearly and decisively on the side of the inerrantists as against the errorists at this crucial point.

THE TABLES COMPLETELY TURNED.

Further, if, as the errorists allege, the inerrancy view leaves the Christian faith indefensible and prostrate at the feet of the sceptic, to pay with its life the penalty of its temerity, much more *à fortiori* their theory or assertion of error even in *one* point does so, so long as one item of evidence for inerrancy remains unanswered; and how much more when it is innumerable errors and indefinite and illimitable erroneousness that is alleged or implied? Therefore, so far as apologetic tenableness is concerned, the whole weight of the argument is demonstrably on the side of inerrancy. And when it is considered that this was the point which the errorists have always regarded and urged as their strongest argument against inerrancy, and the most vulnerable point in that view, on which they have most assuredly vaunted over the supposed apologetic weakness of that position, it does seem strange that *just there*, when thoroughly examined, their own position is immeasurably weaker and more defenceless far, when facing the infidel foe. Why herein is a marvellous thing, that just that very kind of argument, which was supposed to be fatal from an apologetic standpoint to inerrancy, is just the very kind of argument that is demonstrably more fatal, from the same view point, to their own theory. Just at that precise point where the one was proclaimed to be most vulnerable, and perilous apologetically, precisely there the other is patently still more vulnerable, and much more dangerous to the Christian faith.

The reason why the urgers of this objection have failed to perceive this is, that they have quietly ignored the whole Scripture evidence adduced in support of the Bible claim, as if the teaching of Scripture itself, on this its fundamental doctrine, were of no importance, or not evidence at all, or at least nothing requiring attention, while it is in fact the decisive, and the only direct or proper evidence on the question. Second, because they have persistently refused to face, far less to answer, the Bible evidence in favour of inerrancy, as if it were unworthy of consideration. Yet every item of it is of much more weight against the opposite theory than any number of alleged discrepancies or errors are as objections against itself. So long as one single item of that apparent evidence remains undisposed of satisfactorily, it can be

used much more effectively by the sceptic against the truth of the Christian religion, on the errorists' theory, than any apparent errors or discrepancies he can point out can be, even on the extremest theory of inerrancy. Since this is so, even as against this view of Scripture, where will this theory be when compared apologetically with the more cautious and carefully guarded view which we have proved to be the lowest limit of the Bible claim? It will be simply nowhere.

HOW MUCH MORE WHEN THE EVIDENCE IS SO GREAT?

Further, as this is the state of the case with even one item of Scripture evidence in favour of inerrancy, what will it be when they have faced the whole massive array of overwhelming Scripture evidence adduced, which they have to answer and satisfactorily dispose of in every particular before they can get a footing for any apologetic position at all? It must simply be abandoned in despair by every reasonable man, and the whole position be felt, found, and owned to be hopelessly indefensible. And when this is so, even on the theory of errancy positively taught, what must it be on the theory of indefinite erroneousness and of unlimited and illimitable unreliability—the theory now in vogue against the Bible claim? It will obviously be recognised as a self-evident necessity to adopt one or other of the views pronounced to be so untenable and perilous by the assailants of inerrancy; which seems to show that there is no defence of the Christian faith possible at all, nor anything to defend peculiar to Christianity from their position. And that because the sure Book, which is the source and basis of it, is, by this theory, alleged to be false and misleading in its foundation claim.

THE UNTENABLENESS AND SERIOUSNESS OF THE ERRORISTS' POSITION APOLOGETICALLY APPEARS MOST SHARPLY AND SOLEMNLY IN FACE OF CHRIST'S MOST EMPHATIC TEACHING. IT ENABLES THE SCEPTIC TO INVADE THE DIVINITY OF HIS PERSON AND MISSION.

In closing this line of argument, one thing further must be said, and that is, that the untenableness and seriousness, from an apologetic point of view, of the theory of indefinite erroneous-

ness, appear most sharply, inevitably, and momentously in connection with Our Lord Himself and His most emphatic teaching on this specific question. It enables the sceptic to invade the Divinity of His Person and mission. I have already referred to the remarkable and most significant fact that Our Lord has evidently taken special pains to cast in the whole weight of His own most decisive teaching, and Divine authority, just at those very points and doctrines which He foresaw would be assailed and controverted. He has thus, in striking contrast to some of our recent teachers, shut men up to the alternatives of receiving them or rejecting Him. He thereby leaves and requires men to choose between accepting the truths He taught, believing the statements He made, or disowning His authority as a Teacher and rejecting Him as their Lord. He exposes the hypocrisy and inconsistency of calling Him "Lord! Lord!" and yet not doing or believing the things He says. It has also been shown that, if the Gospels and other N.T. writings give even the substance or purport of what He said, His teaching, on the thorough truthfulness, complete trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture, is the most explicit, decisive, and impressive in all Scripture. Therefore the most serious issues are raised by any approach to the virtual denial of this, and still more by the loud and persistent proclamation of the indefinite erroneousness, and unlimited untrustworthiness, and illimitable unauthoritativeness of that Divine, God-breathed Book, which He endorsed, and His Spirit inspired, and every jot and tittle of which He declared to be true, inviolable, and of Divine authority.

This brings us at once face to face with such momentous questions as, "Is Christ infallible, and authoritative as a religious teacher?" and if not, how can He possibly be God, or Saviour, or even a good, if not a deluded man; or how can we rationally seek elsewhere for an infallible standard, or seat of authority in religion? It necessarily forces the assertors of indefinite erroneousness to take up what Dr. Robertson Smith calls the dangerous and untenable position,—to assert precisely the same of Christ as a teacher as they assert of Scripture, that His teaching is misleading, false, and the reverse of God's will,—which is blasphemy;—and this, too, on this the first and fundamental question of all religion; for with it He, with His religion,

stands or falls. It has before been sufficiently shown how easily and unanswerably the sceptic can destroy the source of the Christian faith, when, in direct contradiction of the Bible claim, its professed defenders allege its indefinite erroneousness.

But when they pass, and appeal from Scripture generally to Christ Himself,—as they sometimes vainly do in their exigencies, so as to appear to leave some infallible seat of authority in religion after discarding the Bible—they find that apologetically it is only going from bad to worse. For apart from the fact that we know nothing of Christ or His teaching except through Scripture; so that as far as Scripture is erroneous and untrustworthy, which on this theory is indefinitely and illimitably, so far is our knowledge of Him and of His teaching and of His religion;—it turns out on looking at His words that they are the most solemn, decisive, and ineluctable in Holy Writ against their theory; and that He, above all others, is the most awful, and absolute declarer of the inviolable truthfulness and Divine authority of all Scripture.

Therefore the sceptic, who wishes to assail and overthrow the bulwarks of the Christian faith, and to raze it to its foundations, has only vigorously to seize, and remorselessly to use, the weapons forged by professedly Christian hands, or would-be superior Christian apologists. By placing their theory in direct and strongest contradiction to the first and fundamental claim of Scripture,—most emphatically endorsed by Christ,—as well as to the most explicit words and most absolute declarations and most assured presuppositions of Christ Himself,—the sceptic can in the most direct and unanswerable way, on their theory and principles, demolish and utterly explode, from the very foundations, the whole structure and substance of the Christian faith, falsify at once both the claim of Scripture and of Christ as the Son of God, or even as a teacher sent from God, and annihilate by one fell stroke both the source and centre of the religion of Revelation. *

SCEPTICS AND RATIONALISTS CONSISTENTLY DENY HIS DIVINE CLAIMS AND AUTHORITY AS A TEACHER.

Hence, as a matter of fact, many, acting honestly and thoroughly on this theory, have explicitly denied and disowned

the authority and infallibility of Christ; and have consistently abandoned Christianity, and rejected supernatural religion. Others, while still calling Him "Lord," have declared that "the rights of criticism must be pressed, even against the Master Himself"; because, so long as His authority was acknowledged He appeared most awkwardly and inevitably to block the way of the advance of their rationalistic criticism, and the acceptance of their supposed critical results. Others yet bolder have not refrained from pointing out His supposed "exegetical mistakes" in the interpretation of His own Word,—presuming to aver that He misunderstood the Scripture which Himself inspired, endorsed, and came to fulfil. Others have even ventured to explain the causes and sources of His errors and misconceptions, by attributing them to the literature that He read—especially the Book of Enoch—and the influence on His mind, as on every other mind, of the errors, superstitions, and the narrowing and misleading effects of the opinions and misconceptions of the times in which, and the people among whom, He lived. His specially susceptible religious mind made Him, as supposed, peculiarly open to such influences,—as if He were merely or mainly a creature of His age and environment; instead of being the Creator of a new age, the Father of all the ages, and the Maker of all things new, as all subsequent history has demonstrated. Others still have dared to go the length of declaring that to deny the errancy and actual erroneousness, or to assert the Divine infallibility, reliability, and authority of His words and teaching, is to deny the reality of His humanity, since, as alleged, it is human to err; an oracular but here false and fallacious dictum of those who dare to deny infallibility to the most solemn utterances of the Son of God, while virtually claiming infallibility for themselves and their own crude imaginations. This is equivalent to saying that the incarnation of God was an impossibility, without the God-man being in this respect, as in all others, like sinful men; which is presumption and blasphemy. And some others,—the Kenotics and Rationalising Critics,—from some of whom better things might have been expected,—because they saw how awkwardly Christ and His decisive teaching about the inviolability and Divine authority of Scripture stood in the way of their theories and fancied results, have sought to get over their serious difficulties by talking in Greek euphemism of the Kenosis. By

this in plain English is meant, in this connection, that He became incarnate not only under the necessary limitations of human nature, but also under the ignorance, errancy, and indefinite erroneousness of fallen and sinful humanity. For it is to account for the actual errors He is alleged to have fallen into, and taught on Scripture, that the Kenotic theory has recently been introduced here; as if an infallible and perfect human nature, and a special anointing of the Holy Ghost for His unique work, and above all His Divine nature, in which His Personality distinctly lies and centres, made no real difference between Him and other men in knowledge and teaching.¹ They overlook, too, that limitation of knowledge and errancy or erroneousness in teaching have no necessary connection, truth and nescience are quite compatible with each other, even in ordinary men. How much more in men specially inspired of God to give His Word; as abundantly illustrated in the God-breathed utterances of every Spirit-inspired prophet and apostle. And how most of all in Him who is both the perfect Man and the perfect Word of God; and who was uniquely inspired by the Spirit of God, both in His person and His speech, for the express purpose of expressing and embodying the glory of God, and declaring the mind of God on this supreme, prime question—this root, basal doctrine of all religion and Revelation.

THE SCEPTICS CAN COMPEL THE ERRORISTS TO ABANDON
THEIR CHRISTIANITY OR THEIR THEORY. THE SCEPTIC'S
APOLOGY—THIRD STAGE.

The sceptic has only to place the averments and implications of their theory of indefinite erroneousness in opposition to Christ's explicit teaching, habitual usage, and specific words, in order to make out such direct and manifold contradictions between them as to demonstrate that if the one is true the other must be false; and thus to require them either to abandon their theory or disown their Christianity, to discard their rationalistic principle or to reject Christ and the authority of His teaching.

For he can reason thus: "You say that the Bible is not inerrant, and by that you mean that there are errors in it. Though the negative form is preferred by you to the positive,

¹ See Book II.

because of the controversial advantages it gives you, other Christians who oppose your theory hold that your denial of the inerrancy is really an assertion of the erroneousness of Scripture, in which they surely are right; and the erroneousness you allege is indefinite. You not only aver that there are errors in the Bible, but also that there is an indefinite number of errors. You make no specific limit to the erroneousness, nor give any certain principle by which the error can be eliminated from the truth. On the contrary, you imply that there is no certain and indisputable limit, and no inerrant means, or sure principle of infallibly distinguishing the true from the false in Scripture; and, therefore, that both the errancy and the erroneousness are unlimited and illimitable, indefinite and indeterminable.

“Nor are the things and kinds of things of which erroneousness and error are predicated of a trivial or unimportant nature, as was sometimes said; nor are even the ethical or religious elements of the Bible now exempted from error or held to be infallible by you, as until recently was wont to be maintained by Christian apologists. On the contrary, of no kind of thing in Scripture do you assert by infallibility. Of every kind of thing distinctive of the Bible you deny inerrancy and assert erroneousness,—in matters of religion and morals as well as in everything else. Yea, it is from the distinctively ethical and religious elements that you now most readily and confidently adduce examples and proofs of the errancy and erroneousness of Scripture; and by these you most plausibly and cogently support your theory. So that errancy and erroneousness, rather than infallibility and truthfulness, are what you attribute to Scripture. In fact, what you allege and imply, and your whole methods and assumptions in handling and regarding Scripture reveal and go to favour, is that erroneousness is predicated of every part and element of Scripture; and that infallibility or truthfulness is not predicable of any part, or element, or kind of thing therein.

“As a sceptic I appreciate all that you with rationalistic criticism have done tending to show this, and to disparage and destroy the credibility of the Bible, demolishing its fancied infallibility, showing its untruthfulness and untrustworthiness, and exploding its claimed Divine authority and supposed supernatural origin. But I wonder when you did so much that you did not do more,—that when you went so far you did not go farther. Surely when

you had discredited the Book, and denied its fundamental claim, it was natural and requisite to have rejected the religion of which it is the record, source, and standard, and to have denied the faith of which it is the root, basis, and written embodiment. Certainly, since by Scripture Christ stands, when you show and proclaim its untruthfulness and untrustworthiness, you proclaim His also; when you deny its authority, you ought surely to deny His authority too. When you disown its first and fundamental claim, you are bound logically to disown His claim also, and to reject Him and His religion. For there can be nothing so well established even from the Bible, if it can be said to establish anything, as that with it He stands or falls. Its truthfulness He vouches for. Its trustworthiness He proclaims. Its supernatural origin He declares. Its Divine authority He seals. Its claim to speak the truth in the name of God He endorses with the utmost absoluteness. Its infallibility He ever assumes, asserts, and postulates. By its absolute inviolability He swears in language the most solemn and majestic. Nothing can be clearer or more decisively proved than this.

“So that your theory and His teaching about the Bible come into direct, full, and strongest contradiction. Your statements about it, and His, are so manifestly and manifoldly opposed, that if the one is true the other must be false. And your whole manner of regarding, and method of treating it, are so entirely different from and so diametrically opposite to His as to disclose and demonstrate that if your conceptions and ways of using it are right, His are wrong. What He declared about it you deny. What He assumes you disown. What He postulates you repudiate. What He claims for it you reject. His way of using it, quoting it, and referring to it, you denounce. His method of regarding and handling it, you and your methods condemn. His habitual deference to it, even in the most perplexing and objectionable things, you have no sympathy with. His unquestioning confidence in it, absolute reliance on it as inviolable, even in the minutest points and trivial details, yea in most questionable and staggering things, you and others deprecate and despise. His manner of speaking of it in such exalted terms, of appealing to it as decisive of all controversy, of characterising it as in its integrity inspired of God, and of using it and relying on it in its literality even in minutiae, is utterly

opposed to your whole ideas, principles, and usages. And the very name He gives it as a whole—The Word of God—you repudiate. In fact, His whole attitude to it differs *toto cælo* from yours, proving that your ideas and beliefs about it and His are at utter variance and in diametrical opposition. Beyond a doubt, were He among us speaking of it and using it as He was wont to do in Galilee and Judæa, you would disown His views and statements about it,—He would be behind the age, because ignorant of the results of modern criticism, and would class Him among the belated upholders of an obsolete theory which arose among a credulous people, but which must be set aside by the enlightenment of the nineteenth century.

“Let a few specific examples suffice to illustrate the remarkable contrast. The O.T.—Christ’s Bible—you have largely discredited, and never weary of proclaiming and parading its untrustworthiness, and denying or discrediting its historic truthfulness in large and radical portions. Nor do you fail to disclose your unmeasured contempt for those benighted beings, who now in the light of the fancied results of rationalistic criticism would dare to maintain, as He did, its inviolable truthfulness, unquestionable trustworthiness, and Divine authority. But of that same O.T. Christ said, it was easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one jot or one tittle of it to fail or pass away till all should be fulfilled. You seem to glory in exposing its erroneousness, and showing its unreliability. He ever delighted in proclaiming its inviolable truth, emphasising its absolute trustworthiness, and in declaring its Divine authority. You disparage and discredit the literal fulfilment of prophecy, and disfavour the whole idea of specific prediction of future events and labour to show in the cases alleged that they have been ‘falsified by the events’; and you decry attempts at proving literal and remarkable fulfilments in specific and significant cases as forced and untenable literalism,—the relics of a credulous age. But He declares in the most emphatic and majestic words that He came to fulfil Scripture predictions and prefigurations, even to the minutest points, yea to the jots and tittles; and He and His apostles, after His example, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in a vast variety of specific cases, show, reason on, and emphasise this; and make use of it to prove His Divinity, Messiahship, and resurrection, and the super-

natural origin, inviolable truth, and Divine authority of Holy Scripture.

“He also habitually so uses Scripture, sustains, rules, and inspires His life by it, and is so guided, governed, fortified, and atmospherized by it, and so directed, determined, and even necessitated by it at turning points, and crucial times, even in minute particulars,¹ that the Bible was manifestly to Him His meat and drink, His chart and sword, His light and rule, His comfort and His native air. Nor did one single whisper ever escape His lips to imply that any part or particle of it was to Him anything else than the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever. Nay, His every recorded utterance or reference, declares or implies it was ever so to Him. You are wont to declaim against verbal inspiration (as you vaguely and without definition or specific meaning call it) as a vicious, Rabbinical tradition, or dark-age creation, or post-Reformation dogma, and in the intolerant dogmatism and omniscience of modern rationalistic criticism rave out irate contempt against every cautious critic, careful scholar, reverent student, and independent theologian who hesitates to accept or presumes to question your vague, absurd, and often self-stultifying *ipse dixits* (for how can the ideas or substance be known except through and in the words?) by saying anything in favour of the words of Scripture in which alone the thoughts are expressed, embodied, or ascertainable, as if they were the upholders of an expired or expiring superstition. But Christ not only called the whole O.T. *as composed of words, the Word of God*, but endorsed its pervasive ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ by which its writers claim that what they write is not merely their words but the words of God; yea, ‘the oracles of God,’ as the whole O.T. is in the New called.

“Christ also promised to His apostles, the writers of the N.T., to give them His Spirit to lead them into all truth, and to enable them so to express it that what they said or wrote would be what He said through them by His Spirit (Matt. 10²⁰). In virtue of this, they are said to speak ‘as the Spirit gave them utterance’ (Acts 2⁴), and what they said is declared to be ‘not the word of man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God’ (1 Thess. 2¹³). So that if there is any truth in this or Christ’s promise, He thus, directly or indirectly, explicitly or by antici-

¹ See Book I.

pation, endorses the words both of the O.T. and the New, as the God-breathed expression and embodiment of God's Revelation.

"You are wont to question or deny the historical truthfulness of much that is recorded in Scripture, and to discredit or disown the veritable reality of many of the persons and events, and to feel not only free, but predisposed to raise at every turn, or in any place, the question of the truthfulness and trustworthiness of whatever is stated therein, and not to accept as true anything simply because it is in God's Word, but only what 'finds' you (as Coleridge would say), or what, after examination, satisfies your reason on independent and intrinsic grounds. But in striking contrast to your critical, if not sceptical attitude, He everywhere, on all occasions and in all references, unhesitatingly accepts the statements and representations of the Bible as unquestionably true and trustworthy, without doubt, reservation, or even qualification; and that simply because it is to Him the Word of God, that cannot err, mislead, or fail in jot or tittle. The very idea or possibility of error or unreliability is utterly foreign and opposed to His whole attitude and references to it, as also to His entire conception and use of it. He habitually and indiscriminately makes use of all parts, things, and kinds of things, expressions, and words in Scripture, and in such an authoritative and unquestioning way as to put it beyond question that to Him all things, representations, and items in Scripture are true, trustworthy, and God-inspired. And this truthfulness and reliability of all Scripture, because it is the Word of God, is to Him a postulate and first principle of all true Biblical interpretation. It is thus superabundantly evident that Christ and your critics differ greatly and radically—yea, *toto cælo*—in their whole conceptions of Scripture, in their attitude towards it, way of handling it, in the character and authority they ascribe to it, in their whole manner of using it, method of interpreting it, and way of regarding it. So that if yours is right, His is wrong; if yours is true, His is false; if yours is reliable, His is misleading. If He is at all right, you must 'greatly err,' and *vice versâ*.

"And since your critical view of Scripture, as opposed to Christ's view, appears to be becoming more and more received, and its results accepted, as you say, by the consensus of critical opinion, it is evident that criticism—by exposing the erroneousness and untrustworthiness of the Scriptures He endorsed,

received, and declared to be in their totality the inviolable Word of God—has thus, if true, invalidated and destroyed the reliability, authority, and veracity of Christ as a religious teacher, and, by necessary consequence, discredited and exploded the religion that He taught and originated, and is the sum and substance of. For it is surely a self-evident irrationality to take as an object of faith, or an authority in religion, far less as the object of Divine worship, One who teaches error for truth, and declares to be true what is proved to be false; or to receive as true a religion whose source, basis, and standard are a book that He inspired, endorsed, and declared to be the inviolable Word of God, and is Himself the burden and substance of, and which He says He came to fulfil; but which criticism has, if its conclusions are true, or your theory or principles are adopted, discredited, and exposed the erroneousness, untrustworthiness, and untruthfulness of. So that criticism has thus discredited Christ, and thereby relegated Christianity, like all the other pretended revelations from heaven, to its place among the exploded and expiring superstitions that human phantasy has created and sought to impose upon a credulous humanity for its faith and homage. Thus criticism has at length justified unbelief, and agnosticism ought to be the creed of Christendom and the religion of mankind. And surely, in view of the conflict and contradiction between Christ's view of Scripture and yours, sceptics are amply warranted in their scepticism, agnosticism justified in its unbelief, and the sceptic's apology proved to be valid and unanswerable."

It thus appears that the vaunted apologetic superiority of the errorists' position is a fable,—leaving nothing certain to defend, and no means of defence. There may be weakness and un wisdom apologetically in facing scepticism in the position of absolute inerrancy, but the position of indefinite erroneousness is demonstrated feebleness and palpable folly. And were there no better position of defence for the Christian faith than this theory affords, it would be far better for Christian Apology frankly to own defeat, and acknowledge that no defence is possible, as on the Errorists' views and on the rationalistic principles the sceptic has shown; for if the claim of Scripture is false, and the teaching of Christ wrong, Christianity is a proved delusion, an exploded fiction.

CHAPTER IV.

(II.) *THE POSITIVE DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY FROM THE INERRANTISTS' POSITION.*

THIS demonstration of the untenableness and futility of the attempted defence of the Christian faith from the standpoint and on the principles of the advocates of indefinite erroneousness and illimitable untrustworthiness, does not, however, prove that the opposing positions are any stronger apologetically. On the contrary, it might be said that they are in no better, but a worse position for defence; and that it yet remains to be seen whether there is for Christianity any really defensible position. In any case, before the opposing positions can be fully compared apologetically, it is necessary to consider, further, whether any defence is possible from the other positions, what that defence is or can be made, and how the opposing theories compare along the leading well-tried lines of Christian evidence.

This is all the more necessary because the common and vociferous cry of those errorists—who, notwithstanding all the vaunted superiority of their apologetic position, have been shown to have no tenable position at all—has been that the inerrantists take up a weak and indefensible position, which imperils Christianity by staking its life upon the finding of a single error in the Bible. Were this really so, it would, at first sight, seem a plausible objection to the assertion of absolute inerrancy, and a serious reason for the inerrantists reconsidering the prudence of their position and the truth of their doctrine. And it certainly does appear to show the unwisdom of even seeming to stake Christianity on such a small and narrow issue,—especially when the question of our time as to Scripture is by no means limited to such a narrow point, whether as against

the sceptics, who reject both the Bible and Christianity, or as against the rationalistic errorists, who profess the Christian faith but proclaim the indefinite erroneousness of the Book in which it is embodied and from which alone our knowledge of it is derived. For both of these parties traverse the whole Book, and deny, as we have seen, infallibility or Divine authority to any book, or part, or kind of thing therein.

Nevertheless the inerrantist is by no means destitute of a defence of his position. He cannot have less than the errorist ; for, as shown above, he has none, and on his theory and principles can have no valid defence. But the defender of even absolute inerrancy has not a little to say in answer to both the sceptic and the rationalist. Even admitting, for the present, for the sake of exhibiting the argument of the latter, what the ablest inerrantists deny and disprove, that all the sceptic has to do in order to overthrow Christianity, on their theory, is to make out one error in the Bible ; they have much that is cogent to say in defence of their position apologetically.

I. FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE, NO INDISPUTABLE ERROR HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED. DR. FARRAR, DR. A. B. DAVIDSON, PRINCIPAL D. BROWN, D.D., PRINCIPAL RAINY, D.D., DR. WESTCOTT, DR. MEYER, DR. ELLICOTT.

1st. They hold, and undertake to show that no indubitable error has yet, after the controversies and attempts of nineteen centuries, been demonstrated even in the Scriptures as we have them—of course in the original documents. In support of this they can, specially for the N.T., quote, among others, Arch-deacon Farrar, who, while disowning the view of Scripture that would exclude “the possibility of mistake” by the Bible writers, is constrained to say, “That they did so err, I am not so irreverent as to assert, nor has the widest learning and acutest ingenuity of Scepticism ever pointed to one complete and demonstrable error of fact or doctrine in the O. or N.T.” And Professor A. B. Davidson, D.D., the greatest living British O.T. scholar, has been reported to have said that he did not know of a single one of the so-called errors found in our English Bibles, of which he could say with certainty that it was in the original

document.¹ They can point with confidence to the contests of centuries to prove that the alleged errors have, in the great majority of cases, been triumphantly disproved, and probably never existed save in the imaginations, or by the mistakes, of those who alleged them, or through the misunderstanding or unwisdom of inaccurate or unskilful defenders.

ALLEGED ERRORS AND DISCREPANCIES ARE VANISHING QUANTITIES.

They can show by countless cases that these alleged errors or discrepancies are a vanishing quantity. They thus establish a probability that, with fuller knowledge and larger research, all will yet vanish. They can, with the distinguished and venerable Biblical critic and commentator, Principal David Brown, D.D., prove that the great mass of these alleged errors are the same as were adduced by infidels seventy years ago. And yet in full knowledge of them, he, with the others, was not convinced that there was a single error proved in Scripture, but believed that, if they knew all, every discrepancy would disappear. So, similarly, the great German commentator, Meyer, whose commentaries hold such a high place in every scholar's estimation, recently said. They are, in fact, mostly those to be found in the irreverent writings of Celsus and Porphyry, early in the Christian era, to which the great Christian Fathers so effectively replied ; or in the coarsest productions and caricatures of Tom Paine, last century, as well as of vulgar, uneducated, infidel leaders of recent times,—all of whom have been refuted *ad nauseum*; the Church still holding to the infallibility of Scripture in view of all. They can, with the learned and liberal-minded Principal Rainy, D.D., the ablest living theologian, and with Dr. Westcott, bishop of Durham, *facile princeps* the greatest living N.T. scholar, and the best Biblical scholars of the world in all ages,—still believe and proclaim, in the face and full knowledge of all that has been advanced to the contrary, that, if we knew all, we should probably find that they would all be explained or disappear.

They can, with signal and reassuring effect, refer to the examples of errors that have been alleged, and show that most

¹ See pamphlet by Rev. Robert Howie, D.D., p. 18.

of them, even Christians of ordinary intelligence, as Dr. Brown said, can well afford to smile at, while Biblical scholars can only wonder that such things should have ever been thought errors or discrepancies at all. The vast majority of them can be easily explained, and are mainly the product of misinterpretations of the Bible, or misconceptions of its purpose, or misapprehensions of its character. These are often due to strangely assuming that it is, what it never professes to be, a scientific instead of a popular book, or that it gives with exact precision what is often given only in a round and general way. Almost all of them can be explained without difficulty by the exercise of common sense, the acquirement of available information, and a proper apprehension of what is intended and how it is presented. None of them precludes a probable or possible explanation; and a possible explanation is all that, from the nature of the case, can fairly be expected or logically asked in such a case, since it would be impossible to prove that the possible may not be the actual explanation. This, at least, is sufficient to silence the objector, if not to remove the objection, which is all that can be reasonably required in an apology in answer to an objection, especially as it is made against what is established on its own proper evidence.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHÆOLOGICAL RESEARCH CORROBORATES THE TRUTHFULNESS OF SCRIPTURE.

They can also triumphantly show that the progress of historical, scientific, and archæological research is more and more tending to establish the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and even exact correctness and precise accuracy of Scripture in minute points and trivial things. This may be seen at length in such writings as Paley's and Blunt's undesigned coincidences; Rawlinson's, Maclear's, and Ramsay's historical illustrations; Layard's and Smith's, Sayce's and Boscawen's, Plumptre's and Petrie's, Delitzsch's and Hommel's writings, and The Palestine and other Explorations Societies' publications on archæological researches. Every stroke of the spade, as Professor Sayce puts it, gives fresh confirmation of the historicity, truth, trustworthiness, and even minute accuracy of the Bible statements and representations, and so explodes many fine-spun

but baseless critical theories, assertions, or assumptions. For whatever minor exceptions or reservations may appear, it is beyond question and matter of established fact that the whole trend, drift, and effect of these discoveries is to corroborate and establish the truth and even minute accuracy of Scripture, the Bible and the Babylonian and other Oriental Records showing a marvellous harmony. In the light of all this, and much more that could be said and can be seen in detail in these and many archæological and apologetic works, the inerrantists may be calm and confident, feeling assured that what can still be so well maintained after nineteen centuries of the most keen searching, and often virulent attack, is surely a fairly safe, tenable, and defensible apologetic position. Certainly it is, at least, not to be despised by those who have been shown to be destitute of any tenable position whatever.

2. IT IS ONLY OF THE SCRIPTURES AS ORIGINALLY GIVEN THAT INERRANCY IS PREDICATED, AND ONLY WHEN PROPERLY INTERPRETED.

2nd. But this is only the first line of fortifications. This line of apologetic defence is not the only one on which the inerrantists can take their stand against the assaults of scepticism or rationalism. They declare, and emphasise, in view of the well-known obtuseness and prevalent misrepresentations, that it is not of the Scriptures as we have them, but of the Scriptures as *originally given* by the inspiration of God, and when properly interpreted by the illumination of the inspiring Spirit, by the aid of true research, and the proper application of the sound principles of Biblical interpretation,—that they assert absolute inerrancy. And here they can adduce an amount of evidence that will make their position not only tenable, but comparatively strong,—especially when supported by the massive array of positive evidence for the Christian faith. For they can reason cogently—

FIRST.—That a book, or rather a literature, written by so many different human authors, in so many different ages and lands,—extending from first to last over some fifteen or sixteen centuries; composed, as some of the books of Scripture were,

from diverse documents, and transmitted through so many centuries, the first—speaking roundly—through well-nigh four thousand years, the last almost through two thousand,—should show some of the marks of all ancient literature, and bear evidence of the vicissitudes of time, and disclose some apparent errors and discrepancies that would have easily crept into it in its passage adown this long and often chequered course,—is only what we should expect, unless, indeed, a perpetual miracle was to be wrought in preserving it inviolable and absolutely intact through all these changes and during millenniums,—which no intelligent defender of inerrancy maintains. This one consideration goes far to account for the alleged errors and discrepancies in the Scriptures, as we have them ; and might reasonably warrant the conclusion that, if we had the Scriptures as originally given, these apparent errors would not likely be found in them. In any case, since we do not possess the originals, and never can, it is impossible to prove that these apparent discrepancies were in them ; and, therefore, it is impossible to demonstrate the untenableness of the inerrantist's position. For anything we can tell, it may be the simple truth. And since it *may* be so, the inerrantist, even if he admitted, as he does not, errors in the Scriptures as we have them, can maintain with much cogency, in view of the Bible claim, that the Scriptures, as originally given, were free from error. At least he can certainly from this standpoint be calm in face of every attack of either sceptic or rationalist, fearlessly challenge all Errorists to prove the alleged errors, which they cannot, since they have not the originals, and can, therefore, reasonably hold that his Christianity is not only tenable, but practically irrefutable from his position—it cannot be *disproved*.

SECOND.—RECENT CONFIRMATIONS. PARALLEL OF ANCIENT LITERATURE.

Besides, he finds further positive and independent evidence supporting his position from the notorious facts, that with the progress of textual criticism, archaeological and historical research, and reverent Biblical criticism, apparent errors and discrepancies have often vanished, and are vanishing ; and fresh confirmations of the truth and even minute accuracy of Scripture

are ever being brought to light. So that the progress of discovery and the increase of knowledge go more and more to strengthen his evidence and to establish his position.

Further, he can adduce the well-known parallel of other ancient and classical writings, in which countless corruptions have crept into the text, creating a science of suggested emendations, and from that derive strong corroboration of the truth and reasonableness of his view as to the original sacred writings.

THE BIBLE TRULY INTERPRETED.

Besides all this, it is not only of the Scriptures as originally given, but of these as, and only when, *properly interpreted*, in the sense intended by the Divine Inspirer; and with a true apprehension of the purpose for which each part and passage were given by God, that he would predicate inerrancy. With this all-important limitation, so often overlooked, whole hosts of the supposed errors of Scripture disappear; for in numberless cases those alleged are not errors of Scripture, but errors of interpretation, or misconception, or misapplication, which have been fathered upon the Bible, and transmitted by tradition, as if they were the very Word of God, when they are only the traditions of men. When all the alleged errors thus arising have been eliminated, those remaining will not cause earnest and reasonable men serious concern.

THIRD.—THE THEORIES OF BIBLE COMPOSITION OF ERRORISTS ACCOUNT FOR DISCREPANCIES. THE GOSPELS.

Were anything further required to account for the alleged errors and apparent discrepancies in Scripture, it may be found more than sufficiently in the theories of the composition of Scripture prevalent, which the errorists and rationalistic critics generally accept. This is well illustrated from the theories of the Gospels current among them, though it might be similarly shown from the other Scriptures. The Gospels as we have them are by many said to be not the original, nor more or less correct copies, but second or third or even fourth hand compilations, made from a book of discourses (λόγια) like those of Matthew; and of a book of narratives like Mark's, and now a third source—

a series of discourses (logia) like those in John. These sources were not themselves the originals, but more or less near to what were approximately like the original narratives and discourses spoken by Christ, and written by the apostles or their companions. But compilations so made, Gospels so composed, that along with large and free use of materials from these sources, were mingled and combined other objectionable materials, as also the writers' own conceptions of the Christian faith from their special standpoints, and always coloured with the ideas and errors of their times.¹

Now, while by no means committing ourselves to approval of any of these ever-changing theories of the Gospels, let us meantime accept them in a general way, as expressing roundly the *drift* of what the opponents of inerrancy hold, and see how it bears upon the present question. Obviously, if these views of the composition of Bible books be true, or if there is any considerable measure of truth in them, the cry out made about the alleged errors of Scripture by those holding such views is a marvel. For it must surely be evident on the very face of it that any such theory of the composition of Scripture is more than sufficient to account for the apparent alleged errors in the Scriptures as we have them, even though they were multiplied a hundredfold, while the Scriptures as originally given might well have been free from them. Indeed, such theories render any other explanation of the supposed errors and discrepancies quite superfluous; for they more than amply account for all, and leave an indefinitely large margin to account for any number of similar discrepancies, that the mouse-eyed ingenuity of captious or critical errorists may discover or create. But what amazes one is that any holding such views of Scripture composition should have ever talked about Bible errors, or have argued or imagined therefrom that there were any in the original Scriptures; or could have supposed that any number of even demonstrable errors in the Scriptures as we have them, if so composed, would make it at all probable that there were any, *therefore*, in the original. In short, their own theories of Bible composition, as illustrated by their theories of the Gospels, supply superabundantly the means of their own refutation, when alleging errors in Scripture as evidence against its inerrancy. Were they

¹ See Wendt's *Teaching of Jesus*.

all as valid as they are unconvincing they would, on such theories, simply prove nothing on the question ; for they are all more than adequately accounted for by them ; and one wonders that anyone could imagine that they did.

The inerrantist maintains that his doctrine of inerrancy is found and taught in the explicit statements, express teaching, and primary claim of Scripture ; that it is implied in its whole tone, trend, and air of Divine authority ; and that it forms much of its substance, and pervades it. He finds his main source and citadel for this in the very words and usage of Christ Himself, which is just what would be expected if the original were inerrant. And the errorists have yet to answer the argument, and destroy the evidence, by which he supports his view. He then accounts for all the alleged errors by their own theory as to the composition of our present Scriptures. For such errors as they allege are such as we should expect, if the Scriptures had been composed as they say. They thus themselves supply a complete answer to all their allegations, and make their own theories refute their own objections to his doctrine. So that if there was any lack before of explanation of these alleged errors and discrepancies, and any deficiency of apologetic strength in the inerrantist's position arising therefrom, it is abundantly supplied by the theories of Scripture composition of their opponents ; and the position of the upholders of inerrancy, if not unassailable before, is thus rendered so by the other critical theories of its very assailants,—at least against them. This awkward result may surprise and provoke them, but it is inevitable ; and they cannot escape from it except by either abandoning their critical theories as to the composition of Scripture, and thus admitting that the Scriptures we have are practically the originals, and substantially true,—with all the formidable array of evidence for inerrancy supplied thereby. For if the Scriptures as we have them are admitted to be true, substantially or in main drift, the inerrantist can from even the substance, tone, and trend of them, get all the evidence in support of his doctrine he requires ; while he can make his position strong, if not practically impregnable against them at least. Or if they hold to their theories, they can escape only by renouncing the untenable and for them absurd contention that the adducing of alleged errors in the Scriptures, as we have them, is proof or probability that any error existed in them originally.

THE ERRORISTS MUST EITHER GIVE UP THEIR THEORIES OF
THE GOSPELS OR THEIR ASSERTION OF INDEFINITE
ERRONEOUSNESS.

They thus leave intact the whole evidence for inerrancy, and admit by implication that the inerrantist's position is not only tenable but unassailable by anyone holding their prevalent theories as to the composition of Scripture. If they choose the one, the inerrantist's doctrine is well established, and his apologetic position is practically secure. If they choose the other, he is left undisturbed in possession of the field. So that in either case the doctrine of inerrancy appears safe, and the inerrantist's apologetic position seems not only tenable but strong, for it is only of the Scriptures as originally given that he predicates inerrancy; and the Rationalist can never prove that they were not inerrant. Certainly, at least, the most avowed opponents of inerrancy are clearly precluded by their other theories from assailing it; and if not convinced they are thereby clearly silenced, and dare not lift one voice against it without condemning themselves, and discrediting their other pet and prevalent theories.

THE SCEPTIC ALSO ANSWERED HERE.

All that has been advanced above holds with almost equal force and validity against the attacks made by the sceptic upon the Christian faith through the inerrantist's position. For here they usually follow similar lines, and seek to overthrow Christianity by discrediting the Scriptures, by means of the alleged errors, and largely by the use of materials provided by the professedly Christian opponents of inerrancy. So long as the inerrantist can present such a valid and diversified defence of the Scriptures as originally given, as has been indicated,—yea, such even as the theories of the opponents of it themselves supply,—his apologetic position is both safe and tenable, and amply sufficient to remove concern, and to give calmness and confidence as to the safety of Christianity from even his position. For surely a position that has been so well maintained through the many searching controversies of so many centuries—some of our opponents themselves being witness that not one demonstrable error has

yet been proved, even in the Scriptures as we have them—may, with good reason and without fear, be regarded as defensible *for ever*, when it is only of the Scriptures, as originally given, that inerrancy is predicated; especially when so many of the alleged errors and discrepancies have already vanished, and are daily vanishing in the progress of Biblical, historical, and archæological research, and when all of them can be more than sufficiently accounted for, even by the very theories of the opponents themselves. In the light of all this, and much more that might be said, the inerrantist may be calm as to his apologetic position, every Christian confident in the safety of his religion, and every defender of the faith smile with sublime assurance in the face of all his foes.

3. THE THIRD LINE OF DEFENCE IS THAT THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES CONNECTED WITH ALL OUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE. BUTLER'S ARGUMENT.

But even this is only the second line of defensive fortifications, in which the inerrantists can take their stand. In the first they might, as we have seen, make a good and long defence; and might, indeed, prolong the struggle indefinitely—as has been done for nearly two millenniums—a sufficiently long and trying test surely for any position! dwarfing the British defence of Gibraltar. Or if retiring from the first into the second—the inerrancy of Scripture as originally given and when properly interpreted—they might take their stand, and make a very powerful, and really irrefutable defence; especially as they are being continually reinforced by the growing knowledge of the Bible, and the progress of research. Here, then, the inerrantist might stand with confidence and defy for ever all his foes. But there is a third line of defence, to which in case of difficulty or uncertainty he could as a last and sure resort, if he thought fit, retire, and make his position and his Christianity absolutely impregnable for ever. That is the well-known and recognisedly valid defence that there are difficulties connected with all our knowledge and experience in our present limited condition. There is no sphere of action or region of investigation entirely free from difficulties and objections. Almost every truth of Revelation and fact in nature is more or less connected with difficulty or open to objection—some of the best established truths of science not being excepted. Therefore, if the doctrine

of Scripture and the apologetic position of the inerrantist should have difficulties, and be open to some plausible objections, it is only what from analogy we should expect,—only what is found in every region of truth, connected with the best established facts in nature, and surrounding many of the unquestionable events in our mysterious life, and largely illustrated in the transmission of all ancient literature. But as in these cases so in this, it should rationally occasion no serious concern, nor awaken any lack of confidence as to the truths or facts themselves, when proved by positive evidence and established on their own proper grounds. Sensible and scientific men have in all ages accepted and acted on the truths and facts when established on their own proper evidence, notwithstanding any objections, difficulties, or seeming contradictions that might be alleged against them or connected with them; and they have as reasonable men left these to be removed in the progress of discovery and investigation, or to remain unsolved and unanswered to be dealt with in the usual way, if need be. But they have firmly refused, and rightly, reasonably refused, to abandon what has been established on positive evidence because of any such things, and have thus led on to all our increase of knowledge, advance in science, and experience in life. For difficulty and uncertainty, as Butler in his immortal *Analogy* has incontrovertibly reasoned, are the lot of man on earth, in every region of knowledge, in every sphere of action, and are the means of moral discipline—so that probability is and must be the guide of life. Therefore, should the inerrantist, for any reason, find it necessary, or prudent, or useful, to retire into this third line of defence, he only does what every defender of truth in every region of knowledge, action, or investigation does, and is by reason justified and fully warranted in doing, to baffle and defy unreasonable unbelief. He thus finds himself not only in a position defensible, but impossible to *prove* untenable, in which he can defend himself, his doctrine, and his Christianity against all assailants, finally, fearlessly, and for ever.

SPECIAL REASONS TO ACCOUNT FOR DIFFICULTIES.

In this case, too, there are very special reasons not only to account for the existence of difficulties and the appearance of

errors in Scripture, but also to explain why we should expect them, and be astonished and even staggered if they did not appear; and, indeed, have greater difficulties created by their absence than by their presence in such writings. Their very appearance so far from discrediting the Bible or warranting the unreasonable inference that these discrepancies existed in the original, is an additional evidence of Bible truthfulness and reliability when the true circumstances of the case are realised. Some of these have been indicated above, and the addition of the others, not previously adduced, will further establish the validity of the inerrantist's defence and strengthen the whole position.

I. ALL THE SCRIPTURES ARE ANCIENT. THE VICISSITUDES
OF TIME. TRANSMISSION AND TRANSCRIPTION.

The Scriptures are all of them ancient, some parts of them among the most ancient literature of the world; and anyone at all versed in such literature knows how invariably and inevitably errors and discrepancies creep into such writings in the vicissitudes of time, and in the transmission through so many hands and peoples, languages, and ages. And although it is true, as the Westminster Confession states, that the Scriptures were "by a singular care and providence" preserved as no other ancient writings approach to, yet they were of necessity more or less subject to the effects and influences of such vicissitudes. Through transmission and transcription, transposition and translation, interpolation and corruption, marginal additions and cognate processes, errors and discrepancies would naturally find their way into the fringes, or even into the texture of Scripture, unless, indeed, a perpetual miracle was wrought for its perfect preservation. But these scholarship and research might largely, if not entirely, remove, as in this case has so much been done.

2. MUCH UNCERTAINTY AS TO ORIGIN, AUTHORSHIP, AND
COMPOSITION OF BIBLE BOOKS.

The origin, authorship, method of composition, mode of reproduction, means of transmission, and manner of use of some—yea, many of the sacred writings, are often wrapt in so much uncertainty that it not only precludes the dogmatism of critics,

higher or lower, conservative or revolutionary ; but makes it appear rather rash speculation, requiring omniscience, than ripe scholarship or reverent criticism. This opens up a variety of avenues through which the apparent discrepancies that perplex us now might find their way into the Bible though the original had been free of them. And when one thinks of the possible differences between the spoken and recorded utterances of prophets and apostles, and of the diverse and contrasted documents that may have been used in the composition of some of them—as, for example, the books of the Hexateuch or the Gospels ; and of some of them that may have been of composite authorship,—like Isaiah or Zechariah,—or by the same author at widely separated periods of his life and experience, as the Apocalypse and the Gospel of John,—and of some books, though substantially of one authorship, yet added to, or altered, or adapted by editing and re-editing by other hands to the needs and conditions of later times, as the essentially Mosaic book of Deuteronomy seems to have been ; of the freedom with the originals that later writers might have felt themselves free to take with the books, or materials that they were reproducing in somewhat modified form ; and of the marginal notes, marks, and additions for reading, or public service, and liturgical use in synagogue and church, with all the possibilities of these finding their way into the text itself ; and of the misconceptions and mistakes that might easily arise and be repeated, as the Scriptures passed from copyist to copyist, people to people, language to language, from age to age,—with all the probabilities of mis-transcription and mistranslation, transposition and interpolation, and other corruptions of the original text arising therefrom :—one can readily understand how easily errors and discrepancies might creep into the fringe and surface of the sacred writings in the vicissitudes of millenniums. The marvel is that although there are many various readings the seeming errors occasioning serious difficulty are comparatively so few ; which reveals, indeed, a singular care and providence. But the most amazing thing is, that, in the face of all this, any scholar or careful reasoner should think it at all necessary or reasonable to suppose there were errors in the original Scriptures ; when these things super-abundantly explain them all, and would suffice to account for them though they were multiplied a thousandfold.

3. THE SCRIPTURES ARE FRAGMENTARY, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR MUCH THAT WOULD PROBABLY VANISH IF WE KNEW ALL.

The writings of the Bible are at best only fragmentary ; and being so occasion difficulties that would not arise if they were complete and full in their accounts and treatment of what they refer to. Because of this very fragmentariness and incompleteness, seeming errors and discrepancies appear, that would vanish if we only had parts wanting or knew the whole. The principle and importance of this observation are familiar to sensible men in daily life. How often intelligent men are startled and staggered and faced with apparent contradictions, by the representations made about people and things that when we get more information and fuller knowledge put the matters in an entirely different light, and lead us sometimes to commend what before we condemned, and to understand and appreciate what before was a mystery and a contradiction to us. And so it is with Scripture. Every careful reader of Scripture has observed references to books now lost, from which materials have been taken for fuller information on the matters alluded to—such as the books of Jashar, the Wars of Jehovah, the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel—probably the royal archives. As the materials taken from them were often fragmentary and elliptical, seeming errors and discrepancies might easily arise and appear. Hence, perhaps, the explanation partly of that most decried and least relied on book in the O.T.—Second Chronicles—which to critics has more of such difficulties than any Bible book.

The Four Gospels complementary and confirmatory.

Then, as is well known,¹ the Gospels are after all only fragmentary—at most only selections from the words and works of Christ—as John writing near the end of his life, evidently with a knowledge of the Synoptic Gospels, at the close of his own supplementary Gospel expressly says, in terms so round and large, as to leave on us the impression, from him who most fully realised it, how fragmentary and incomplete at best are the Gospel records of the life and teaching of Our Lord. And so of the other parts of Scripture. If this one fact — the fragmentari-

¹ See Dr. Westcott's *Introduction to the Gospels*.

ness of the writings—receives full consideration and due weight, it will go far to explain the apparent errors, seeming conflicts, and perplexing difficulties in the Bible.

The force of this may be the better realised if it is considered how these would be multiplied and magnified. How much more numerous and formidable these would be, for example, if we had only one Gospel instead of four! How much more fragmentary and incomplete the Christian revelation would be, and how much we should lose if we had the Synoptics without the Fourth Gospel! How much explanatory and confirmatory material we should miss, and truth evidencing detail we should lack, if we had the Epistles of Paul without the Acts of the Apostles, — the undesigned coincidences between which have given us one of our best lines of Christian evidence, and one of the most satisfactory means of establishing, even in minute details, the truthfulness of Scripture! Facts, particulars, stand-points, and connections are given us in one Gospel that are omitted in another written from a different standpoint, but presenting substantially the same thing in a different aspect and for another purpose. When the fresh particulars and new light are thus obtained from the different complementary representations of other Gospels, statements and representations that before were perplexing and seemed even contradictory, are made plain and harmonious. From these, of which there are many striking examples, we find a principle in operation that fully warrants the conclusion that, if we only had more of this information, and possessed even further additions like those given in John's Gospel, still more if we were conversant with those other things that Jesus said and did, which John knew and refers to, but does not from sheer superabundance attempt to write — especially if we knew the whole — those difficulties, discrepancies, and apparent errors that may now perplex or stagger us, and lead some, rashly and unwarrantably, to come to wrong conclusions, would probably all vanish, or at least be so diminished and modified as to occasion little or no difficulty. If the possession of the four Gospels, with the fuller knowledge and diversified light they supply on the life and teaching of Our Lord, has removed so much and explained more that would have remained discrepant if we had only one Gospel, or two instead of four, or the Synoptics without the Fourth Gospel—is it

not reasonable to infer that if we only had more, if we only knew the whole, that all would probably be made plain and harmonious, or at least as far as could be reasonably expected in such a record of such a life?

The very fulness and infinitude of it made the narrative of it overleap the narrow bounds of ordinary biography, and refuse to be restricted within the contracted limits of current literature, or ruled by the conventional canons of literary criticism. This fragmentary character of the sacred writings, then, supplies a further and far-reaching principle and means of explaining many apparent discrepancies or difficulties in the Bible; and supplies another practically insurmountable fortress for the complete defence of our already impregnable position. But although they are fragmentary as a history, they are complete as a revelation; though defective as a biography, they are sufficient as a Gospel.¹

4. THE BIBLE GIVEN CHIEFLY AS A REVELATION FOR FAITH AND LIFE. EVERYTHING SUBORDINATED TO THIS.

This brings in view a fourth source of explanation, and of additional confirmatory defence. The Scriptures, though largely historical and actually true, are really, so far as they are history, a Revelation; and the historical form is often taken as that by which Divine Wisdom thought best to give the Revelation. The chief end of Scripture is to reveal the will of God for our salvation. This is its real design, its avowed purpose, and its distinct object. This lies on its very face, and is recognised as beyond dispute by all believing students of it. This being so, everything is subordinated to this ruling purpose, and every other interest—historical, literary, or æsthetic—is of necessity made subservient to this chief end. The whole selection, arrangement, and expression of the materials are moulded and dominated by this conception; and all the parts and items are affected and determined by this aim, and made to bend and contribute to the attainment of this ideal.

It is easy, therefore, to see how seemingly conflicting statements might appear in some parts of Scripture, to the critic who reads it simply as history. Nor is it to be wondered at that he,

¹ See Dr. Westcott's *The Revelation of the Risen Christ*.

studying it simply as history, and estimating it by the ordinary canons of historical criticism, should be staggered at the indifference to these, and the freedoms taken with the details of the narrative, and the apparent disregard of the merely historical aspects, and that, viewing it from a purely historical or literary standpoint, he should put no high value on it as a historical source, or even disparage it in this respect, or in some other merely literary aspect. But all this arises from a misconception of the very purpose of Scripture, and from failing to recognise sufficiently the real and avowed design of the Bible. In every part of it, and very specially in its historical parts, of which it is so largely composed, it is essentially, distinctively, and professedly a Revelation—God's written message to mankind. And if this, its express purpose, is only recognised and realised, this subordination of the history to the Revelation, and of the historical and the literary to the ethical and the spiritual, is precisely what we should expect, and what is fact.

This comparative indifference to other aspects is the natural effect of supreme and intense regard for the chief end of Revelation—the moral and religious education of men. Everything else is properly and spontaneously subordinated to this dominating idea and chief end. History, and every other thing, is made subservient to this regnant design; and the facts of history, like all other things, are utilised with a view to, and just in so far as they serve, this purpose; and they are drawn in and dealt with irrespective of other aspects in the way Divine wisdom and the inspiring Spirit deemed the best to reveal God's will for our salvation. This is surely as it should be, and it explains many of the apparent difficulties and discrepancies which have been supposed to exist in parts of Scripture. It is the overlooking or failing adequately to recognise this that has led some rashly to charge Scripture with errors, to make a round general charge of erroneousness, and to proclaim the false doctrine of the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture. Others have been led to pronounce harsh and unwarrantable judgments on some parts of it.

This explains and answers recent criticism on the Book of Judges.

The Book of Judges furnishes a good example of this. With the exception of Second Chronicles, no book of Scripture has

been more disparaged from a historical view-point by certain literary critics than this. Nor have some scrupled to depreciate its value as history, and even to pronounce it untrustworthy. In support and justification of this disparagement, they charge the writer with overriding the history, and, disregarding the literary interests, to rush on to teach morality and religion, specially the evil of forsaking the Lord, and the value of returning to and obeying Him—making the history simply his tool—and bending the facts to enforce that. Now, while the abler and wiser upholders of inerrancy would not admit that the facts of the history have been so handled as to warrant a general charge of erroneousness, or even that any real disregard of truth has been proved in Judges, or that the history has been actually misrepresented, yet it would not be denied that the history is freely handled, that the historical interests are subordinated to the religious truth, that the facts are so used, and bent, and adapted as to best serve the expression of the intended revelation—the actual being made subservient to the ethical and the spiritual—the merely historical aspects being little regarded, in regard for the moral and religious uses they so readily and forcibly lend themselves to, when seized, selected, and utilised by the Spirit of inspiration. But so far from these things discrediting the truthfulness, lessening the trustworthiness, or falsifying the claimed inspiration of the book or of the Scriptures, they, on the contrary, when properly regarded, do the very reverse.

The period of the Judges was a long and an eventful period in the history of Israel, which formed a necessary and in some respects an important part in the training of the chosen race for their high vocation and destiny among the nations. It taught them, and was fitted and intended to teach them, their entire dependence on Jehovah, the evil of disobedience to Him, the folly of forsaking the Lord to serve other gods, God's mercy in forgiving them, and His mightiness in delivering them, when in their distress—the fruit of their sin—they turned to Him in penitence, and sought the Lord with all their hearts. But it contributed less perhaps than any other period to the development of Revelation, or the progress of mankind, or even of Israel itself. And the Book of Judges shows its Divine inspiration by ignoring much of the history of this lengthened but largely

unproductive and unprogressive period of darkness and of blood, by recording all that was worth recording of it in the Eternal Book in a comparatively short writing, and by selecting for its record mainly outstanding events in the lives of some of those noble men of God whose faith and heroism illumined that long, dark night of backsliding and bloodshed, and by their heroic deeds done in Jehovah's name redeemed it from barrenness and oblivion. It takes no notice of much of the history at all, because it would have served little or no purpose in unfolding the Revelation of God, or in disclosing the workings of Divine grace. It selects only those salient points that best serve to enforce the moral and religious lessons God was teaching men by terrible things in righteousness, when they were backsliding into sin; and the marvels of His mercy when they repented of their sins and turned to the Lord their God. And, while it cannot be fairly proved to misrepresent the history, or to pervert the facts, yet it purposely evidently does pay little regard to merely historical aspects or niceties, and thus offends the merely historical sense, and so selects, manipulates, and distributes the facts as best to set forth the principles of God's moral government among men and nations, and the religious and ethical significance of history.¹ These are the only aspects worthy of a place in the Eternal Book, or fitted to exhibit the progress of Revelation.

But surely this is the acknowledged design of Scripture—the very end of Revelation, as all concerned in this discussion admit—even to reveal the will of God for our salvation. The method above indicated of handling history is obviously in full harmony with this—just what we should expect—and indeed seems the only thing that would be in full accord therewith. So that this mode of treating history which pays little regard to it merely as history, and utilises it chiefly to reveal its moral and religious significance—to give a Revelation through the history—in the history—which has offended some and staggered others when studying it merely as literature and history—is so far from warranting such disparagement as Judges and some other historical books have suffered from certain critics, that it rather evidences their Divine origin and inspiration, and shows their

¹ Some of our greatest philosophic historians follow this method. See Carlyle's *French Revolution*, *Oliver Cromwell*, and *Heroes and Hero-Worship*.

adaptation to the chief end of Scripture. It also naturally accounts for supposed discrepancies and historical defects, by showing how they arise and appear. It is the overlooking of this, or the inadequate recognition of it practically, by some studying Scripture for other purposes, that has prevented them perceiving the origin and explanation of these difficulties and apparent discrepancies, which, by their looking at it merely as history, have perplexed and offended them, and led them to disparage some parts of Scripture, and thus the way has been opened up for discrediting the whole. Therefore, when the Scriptures are steadily regarded in their true light as a revelation of the will of God for our salvation, we find another and far-reaching means of explaining the apparent difficulties and discrepancies.

5. THE BIBLE IS AN ORIENTAL BOOK. ORIENTAL MIND AND LITERARY METHODS GREATLY DIFFERENT FROM OURS.

The fifth and last means of explanation of alleged errors and apparent discrepancies that we shall mention now is that the Bible is both an Oriental and an ancient book. This fact has received far too little consideration in many recent discussions. We are so familiar with the Bible, and so many editions of it in every form have been issued, that we are apt unconsciously to think of it as a modern book, published in Paternoster Row, printed in some famous University Press, and which we can read as we would read the daily newspaper or the latest primer; forgetting, or not sufficiently realising, that it is a very ancient book, the latest part of which was published about eighteen-hundred years ago, and the earliest probably thirty-five centuries ago—using materials much older still. We fail to recognise that it was written among, by, and for an exceedingly different people, in a very different part of the globe, in entirely different conditions—religious, moral, and social—with vastly different religious conceptions, moral ideals, and literary methods. There could, therefore, be no greater literary error, and no more signal critical injustice, than to measure and judge the sacred literature of the O. and N.T. by the standard and tests of our modern and Western secular literature.

THE BIBLE IN THE EXILE.

And yet this is what is most frequently done by the teachers of Scripture erroneusness, who never seem to weary of proclaiming its errors, and are ever most eager to discover what to them seems evidence of erroneusness. And yet in most cases their apparent errors are simply their own creations, the fruit of their own misconceptions and prepossessions, and the direct result of their violation or neglect of the first principles of sound and just interpretation. No wonder that some of the greatest masters of Hebrew literature should protest against the unscientific and perverse methods in which the O.T. Scriptures have been handled by some critics, in order to relegate them mostly to the Exile and the Maccabæan age. Indeed the chief end and highest ambition of some modern O.T. critics seems to be to banish the Bible to the Exile, to bring it down to the Captivity, or beyond, and so to break, and bruise, and abuse God's Word in that foreign and spiritually strange land, as did the Babylonians God's people. So that the O.T. in the Exile, the Bible in Captivity, would aptly define the standpoint and describe the result of their Rationalistic criticism. But the God of the Bible lives, and He will wither their exiling and destructive criticism, restore His Word as He did His people to its own land, true place, and Divine supremacy. He that sits in heaven shall laugh at them. The Most High Himself shall establish it.

In order to understand, interpret, or deal justly by any literature, we must study it from the standpoint of its writers, master their literary methods, realise the situation in which its various parts were written, ascertain and enter into their peculiar conceptions, and above all things recognise and utilise their distinctive characteristics. These are the prime requisites of any just, rational, or trustworthy criticism. They are of special importance and imperative necessity in Biblical criticism. They must be maintained and insisted on as much against the irrational rationalists, who disown or traverse them, to deduce their own favourite results, in harmony with their own prejudice and untenable presuppositions, as against the traditional dogmatists, who may pervert and fragment Divine oracles by misapplying isolated texts, torn from their context, to buttress or confirm their doctrinal systems—systems which, however true in themselves, or

sustained by other Scriptures, cannot legitimately claim these to support them. For the Scriptures are not only ancient and Oriental, with all the distinctive characteristics of the Oriental mind, and with all the peculiarities of Eastern literary methods, but so vastly different from the Western, and in such striking contrast to our modern methods as to need care in handling.

CONTRAST BETWEEN ORIENTAL RELIGIOUS WRITINGS AND OURS.

Further, they are also ancient and Oriental religious writings, in which these contrasts reach a climax, and are even more remarkable than in other kinds of writings. We are prosaic, they are poetical. We are logical, they are intuitive. We are historical, they are imaginative. They naturally express their religious conceptions largely in poetical forms or sententious sayings, in which there is often little regard to logical order or consecutive thought. We mostly express them in didactic form and discussive manner; in which orderly statement and connected thought largely obtain, and even scientific correctness is more and more sought after. They revel in figurative expressions and mystical conceptions on religious things. We are sparing in our use of figures of speech, and generally prefer the simpler and less idealistic style. In fact all nature, life, and visible things were to them incomparably more full of God, teeming with spiritual idea and suggestion, than to us less mystic and more factual Westerns. To them far more than to us it was true that the seen is but the shadow of the unseen, the material the embodiment of the spiritual, and the temporal the symbol of the eternal. The earth to them was "crammed with heaven, and every common bush aglow with God." They adopt as by a native genius, and without hesitation, literary devices—such as putting the sentiments of a later writer into the lips of some ancient prophet or legislator, whose principles they expressed as if they were his own words—which, with our conceptions and literary habits, we should not dare to use; though some ancient Westerns did so in measure—witness the speeches in Livy's *History of Rome* and Chaucer's *Faërie Queen*. It is because these great differences are ignored or unrecognised that they are by Westerns often misunderstood and misjudged; and the Bible writers are declared to have

written innumerable errors, when the mistakes are really made by those who thus misinterpret them, or judge them by their own literary ideals, and measure them by our modern literary usage, in violation of the first principles of all just and scientific Biblical criticism. No wonder that they should thus make out countless errors in Scripture, but they are errors of their own creation!

CONCLUSION. COMPARED EVEN WITH ABSOLUTE INERRANCY, INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS IS APOLOGETICALLY WEAK AND INDEFENSIBLE.

It thus appears that the most extreme position taken up by the defenders of Bible inerrancy is, when thus supported by these most reasonable and weighty considerations, not only tenable, but seems practically irrefutable apologetically; and when compared with the theory of indefinite erroneousness, it is strength itself, as against demonstrated weakness and utter indefensibility. In comparing the two positions apologetically then, as against the avowed opponents of the Christian faith, the sum and conclusion of the whole discussion is this, that, while the absolute inerrantist's position is thoroughly defensible and ultimately impregnable, the position of those who proclaim the indefinite and illimitable erroneousness of Scripture is utterly untenable and ultimately subversive of the Christian faith. In comparison, therefore, with even the extremest position of the upholders of Scripture truthfulness and trustworthiness, and the position of those who indefinitely deny or discredit these, it must be said there is really no comparison apologetically. The one has a valid and long upheld defence, the other has really no defence at all to present against skilful scepticism. Their own very principles and practices render a valid defence impossible to them.

NOTE.—Even Dr. Farrar says as to the Acts: "Taking one by one all the objections which have been advanced against the credibility of the Acts, I should prove—as I have elsewhere tried to do—that in *every instance*, and in the minutest particulars, the accuracy and trustworthiness of the narrator can be triumphantly vindicated" (*Symposium*, p. 231). With this, and his statement that no demonstrable error has been proved, it is strange that Divine inspiration is not owned as the only rational explanation of the unique fact.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONTRASTED POSITIONS COMPARED APOLOGETICALLY. INDEFINITE ERRONE- OUSNESS AND THOROUGH TRUTHFULNESS.

IN comparison, therefore, with the apologetic position of those who do not take up the extreme position of absolute inerrancy, but who take their stand on the more guarded but less exposed position,—simply on the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture as originally given, and when truly interpreted,—the errorist's position is really nowhere ; for all that has been adduced above in support of the extremest position holds *à fortiori* with immensely increased force and cogency of this more guarded and less assailable position. In saying this last, however, I do not mean to withdraw or weaken anything that has been or may be adduced for the absolute inerrantist's position, or for its incomparable superiority apologetically to the errorist's position.

But, as indicated above, that is not the position I take up ; though it is shown how tenable, and practically irrefutable that position may be made, whether as against the sceptical unbeliever, or the rationalistic Christian. While it has been urged that there is an apparent Scripture warrant for the inerrantist's contention, especially in the words, usage, and attitude of Our Lord towards all Scripture ; and while that position has without any serious difficulty been maintained for ages against all the assaults of antichristian scepticism, on the one hand, or of professedly Christian but really rationalistic criticism on the other ; and while the repeated attacks made upon it through all the ages have been specifically met and sufficiently answered, with at most only small cases where the issue might be thought doubtful in paltry points, but in all of which they have at least signally failed to prove the untenableness of the inerrantist's position ; yet

we distinctly decline to take our stand for the defence of the Christian faith on this narrow ground, in this unwisely exposed position.

DEFENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH FROM THE POSITION OF
THE TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE
AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

In his despatch from Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington wrote of the battle at Quatre Bras, "We maintained our position, and completely defeated and repulsed all the enemy's attempts to get possession of it."¹ And although he might, with his brave army and military genius, have maintained that position long enough to serve the end in view, yet he deliberately withdrew from that more exposed and less strong position, and advisedly took his stand in the final struggle upon the previously chosen and stronger position of Waterloo; and there he not only repulsed and defeated all the attempts of the audacious foe, but from that position "delivered the blow" that completely crushed the bold usurper, and restored the freedom and established the peace of Europe. So it is in the defence of the Christian faith. We should not expose ourselves unnecessarily to the plausible charge of mistaking extremeness for strength of position. We do not gain anything, but risk the loss of much, by taking our stand for the defence of Christianity on the ground of absolute inerrancy. In such serious issues to contend for what is not necessary is not wise. It is not necessary in the controversy against either the sceptics or the rationalists.

RATIONALISM AND SCEPTICISM ATTACK CHRISTIANITY NOT
SO MUCH ON POSITION OF BIBLE INERRANCY, AS ON ITS
TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE ORIGIN
AND AUTHORITY.

It is not merely in paltry trivialities, with which absolute inerrancy mostly deals, that they assert errancy and erroneousness in Scripture, but in large and important things—in fact, as seen in every kind of thing,—specially in the vital matters of its moral and religious teaching. The trivialities are seized upon, because they can the more plausibly without alarm be adduced, simply to

¹ Wellington's Despatches.

get, through them, a pretext for riding roughshod over all Scripture—giving full scope to their destructive criticism ; and for accepting as true only such parts and elements of Scripture as suits or “finds” them.

THE UNWISDOM OF TAKING OUR STAND ON ABSOLUTE INERRANCY.

It is most unwise therefore, as it is unnecessary, in answering them to take up the extreme position of absolute inerrancy. It is not directed specifically against what is their real contention and chief aim. It fails to meet them fully and squarely on what is their avowedly distinctive ground. It is not against absolute inerrancy that they really or chiefly contend, but against the definite truthfulness, thorough trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture. Their real object is to declare its indefinite erroneousness, in order that they may be free to choose or reject as much or as little of Scripture as their own reason or consciousness may deem best. It is better, therefore, to meet them on their own real ground, than on a narrow and unnecessarily exacting position, against which objections may be more easily and plausibly urged.

Further, it is obviously a less guarded and more exposed position. For the opponent of absolute inerrancy can make his attack along the whole line, and over every part and point in Scripture ; and if he can only seem to make out one demonstrable error in the most trivial thing, he seems to have gained his end, and apparently rendered the Bible claim untenable, or at least may the more plausibly make it appear that he has done so, with all the disastrous issues deducible therefrom. Yea, if he even makes out one apparent error or discrepancy, and seems to show that this was in the original, he may apparently establish a probability against absolute inerrancy, and thereby against the claim of Scripture ; and ultimately against the Christian faith, provided it is staked upon the absolute inerrancy of Scripture. He may thus the more easily impose on many—especially on those who have not thought the question through. It is surely, therefore, most unwise thus unnecessarily to expose or imperil the whole position ; especially when it is not required to answer them.

Besides, by taking our stand in our less exposed and more

guarded position, we avoid many of the side issues, doubtful questions, and perplexing definitions that arise in connection with the position of absolute inerrancy. For, as indicated above, many questions of a very doubtful and seemingly insoluble kind arise about it. What is "absolute" in such matters? Is such a word strictly usable at all in such connections? Can anything of the kind be properly called absolute? Is not even the Revelation itself relatively imperfect, and not absolutely perfect; since Divine truth cannot dwell perfectly except in the Divine mind? And is it not necessarily so by the limitations of human thought and language, by the revelation coming through the at best relatively imperfect media of human powers and expression? So that, strictly speaking, the use of the word "absolute" is not warrantable as to the Revelation itself; and, therefore, still less to the written expression of it. Then what does "inerrancy" precisely mean? To some it means one thing, to others another. So that there is risk of interminable misunderstanding. What would be inerrant, too, from one standard would be erroneous from another; what would be errorless from a popular standard and standpoint, would be errant or inaccurate from a scientific. So that the whole question of the standard, and the use of language, and definitions—which are always difficult—with all connected therewith—immediately arise. Then does not the very word "inerrancy," an invention of the errorists, assume that the Bible is a scientific and precisian book?—which is not true, which is in itself an error, and a fertile source of error, misconception, and misrepresentation. Does not the very use of it, begun by our opponents, place the defenders of the Scripture claim in a narrow, disadvantageous, and even false position, which forces them to maintain and prove a negative, which they are entitled logically to decline to do? How much more difficult is it to maintain and prove that the Bible is inerrant,—which is not fairly required or obligatory,—than to prove that it is true, trustworthy, and authoritative,—which is all that can be reasonably asked! And how much more difficult for the errorists to prove that the Bible is untrue, and untrustworthy, than to prove that it is not absolutely inerrant! All these, and similar side issues, misconceptions, and uncertainties, are avoided by taking our stand against sceptics and rationalists on the position of the thorough truth-

fulness, entire trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture as such, and not on absolute inerrancy.

Further still, by taking our stand there, instead of on this extreme, exposed, and disputable position, we get the full weight of the evidence for the argument from the claim of Scripture and the authority of Christ, backed by all the Christian evidences, to support the truth and authority of Scripture, and to defend the Christian faith against all assailants. And although some parts of the Scripture evidence appear to claim absolute inerrancy, or something like it, or what it may be supposed to mean, yet it does not so unquestionably as for the other prove *that* to be the claim made by Scripture for itself. It at least does not so demonstrably put that beyond all possible question, or plausible reason for reservation. It might with more show of reason or plausibility be made to appear that the evidence does not so inevitably preclude every view short of absolute inerrancy, or does not so absolutely require and demand that as the other. It could with more appearance of reason than in the other, be held that the evidence does not so demonstrably and indisputably amount to a claim for absolute inerrancy as for the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture; or at least that it is not so unreasonable to deny or question the one as the other, in the light of the whole mass of the proof by which the latter is established.

THE COMPARATIVE APOLOGETIC STRENGTH OF THE POSITION OF THE TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

All the evidence favourable to the first is *à fortiori* at least equally, yea, more strongly and less questionably valid and cogent for the second. If it should not, or might be made to appear not, to come quite up to the one, it must at least come up to the other, and cannot mean less than, or be satisfied with any thing short of, that; nor can it reasonably, or even plausibly, be made to appear so. Besides, there is a great mass of the evidence that does not seem to support or prove the one, that directly, fully, unequivocally, and indisputably supports and establishes the other. Indeed, by far the larger and weightier part of the evidence is of that character and to that effect. So

that the more guarded and less exposed position has many unique and decisive advantages, is by far the stronger position apologetically, and is, in fact, simply and demonstrably impregnable for ever. Its terminology, definition, and meaning are less questionable or uncertain. It is much less open to attack through misconception, misrepresentation, and caricature, by presenting a much less exposed line, and less sharply pointed or protruded front for the shafts of the foe. It gets free of many of the most common but trivial objections to Scripture, which are generally directed against the view of absolute inerrancy, and may be made plausible as against that, but have no weight or validity against itself. It has the whole mighty mass and solid weight of the vast and varied evidence of Scripture, endorsed by the Divine authority of Christ, confirmed by the whole array of the Christian evidences to support it in the defence of the Christian faith against all assailants.

And if the Christian faith is, as has been proved at length above, defensible, and has been well defended, and never proved untenable, even from the extremest position, how much more can it be shown to be so from this more guarded, less exposed, and much stronger position!—when all the arguments adduced for the one hold with immensely increased weight and cogency for the other; and when there are many independent and powerful arguments and grounds peculiar or specially favourable to itself; and when it is not open to many of the objections, uncertainties, and attacks to which the other is exposed! The apologetic value and strength of this position will appear the more clearly and forcibly when we look at the advantages in detail, and as directed in defence against the sceptical, or rationalistic assailants.

I. IT FREES THE DEFENCE FROM MANY PLAUSIBLE OBJECTIONS.

As already indicated, it plainly frees us from many of the most common and plausible objections to Scripture. Many of these objections are of the most paltry and contemptible character—"despicable" trivialities, as Dr. Rainy calls them—things that whatever be the precise fact as to them, do not in the least affect the truthfulness or trustworthiness of Scripture. Such trivialities, as whether it was ten thousand or nine thousand nine

hundred and ninety-nine that fell in a battle, or whether it was precisely the sixth or nearer the seventh hour that a certain event happened, whether when "all Judea" went out to hear John the Baptist it was literally every individual, man, woman, and child; or simply a round expression for the great mass of the people. Such questions as these are really contemptible, and are solemn trifling with the Holy Oracles. Whatever bearing such despicable trivialities might have on a theory of literal and absolute inerrancy, they do not in the least affect the truthfulness or trustworthiness of Scripture; and they are based upon perversions of its obvious meaning, and a fundamentally false conception of its character and purpose, for the Bible is not a precisian but a popular book, which does not concern itself about, or profess to furnish, such paltry literalities. All objections of this nature are therefore irrelevant as against our position. They simply do not touch it; nor can any perverse ingenuity plausibly make them even appear to do so.

2. IT PRESENTS A MUCH LESS EXPOSED LINE FOR ATTACK.

Then, our position has a much shorter and less exposed line for the assaults of opponents, and presents fewer points of attack. In fact it is only in an indirect way that many of the supposed objections can, with any apparent plausibility, be brought against our position at all. They may have some apparent validity against a theory of precisian literalism, but, as against ours, little or none. For by its very roundness it presents few if any points of attack for many of the common shafts of unbelief. Almost all those small points that belong to the category of discrepancies, inaccuracies, apparent inconsistency, or seeming trivial conflict, but which are often so deftly and unscrupulously manipulated or glided into alleged errors, are rendered pointless and innocuous against our more guarded and less pointed position, and are mere irrelevancies as against it.

3. IT LAYS ON THE SCEPTIC THE BURDEN OF DISPROVING THE TRUTHFULNESS AND TRUSTWORTHINESS OF SCRIPTURE.

Besides, it logically lays upon the sceptic the obligation to *disprove* the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of

Scripture—a difficult, if not impossible thing to make even plausibly apparent, in face of all the overwhelming array of positive evidence adducible, which goes to establish and demonstrate that,—and in view of the ever increasing mass of confirmations thereof which historical and archæological research, the latest discovery, and the highest scholarship are bringing to light. These of late have immensely multiplied, much to the confusion and explosion of many pretentious theories and vaunted results of would-be oracular detractors from the truthfulness and trustworthiness of God's Word, who, while vehemently denying the infallibility of the Oracles of God, never weary of proclaiming or implying the infallibility of their own oracles.

4. IT PREVENTS RATIONALISING BUT PROFESSED CHRISTIANS FROM USING ANY ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE VERACITY AND DIVINE CHARACTER OF SCRIPTURE, WHICH THEY EQUALLY WITH US MUST MAINTAIN.

Further, it clearly precludes and nullifies all those objections brought against Scripture by rationalistic but professedly Christian critics, which, if they have any validity or weight at all, are objections not to its infallibility and inviolability as such, but against its Divine origin, veracity, and authority, which they with us are equally bound to uphold, if Revelation in any definite and intelligible sense is to be maintained at all. All objections of this nature are, from them at least, inadmissible, whatever they may be from avowed rejectors of supernatural Revelation. For they are, if anything, objections or arguments equally against themselves, and as really destructive of their own position. If they hold Revelation in any true or definite sense, they are *ipso facto* precluded from adducing against our position any objections or arguments of such a character as when carried to their ultimate issues stultify the objectors and overthrow their own position. Yet this is what unconsciously most of the errorists' objections do; so that the objectors are by the very guardedness and strength of our position silenced or driven into scepticism, where they can be met on other grounds, and reasoned into absurdity.

5. IT BRINGS RATIONALISTS AND SCEPTICS DIRECTLY INTO CONFLICT WITH THE DECISIVE WORDS AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST, BACKED BY THE WHOLE WEIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

Nay, more, it brings both rationalists and sceptics face to face with the decisive and ineluctable teaching of Christ, and into direct and emphatic conflict with Him and His Divine authority,—with all the massive weight and unanswerable force of the evidences by which His claims are established, and His authority and supremacy as a religious teacher are demonstrated. For by no ingenious device or perverse interpretation is it possible to make it even appear as if Christ did not hold, teach, and emphasise the truthfulness, trustworthiness, inviolableness, and the Divine origin and authority of all Scripture, as proved above indisputably from His whole tone, attitude, usage, and very words. Whatever may be said about literal and absolute inerrancy, there is no possibility of making it appear that Christ did not teach at least the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and the Divine character and authority of Scripture. Therefore, if they are to overthrow our position, they must first destroy His authority, and disprove His claims, and answer the whole massive and triumphant array of the Christian evidences, which have calmly defied the onsets of centuries, and against which all the successive and virulent attacks of scepticism have for ages dashed in vain. We are not so necessarily and demonstrably required by Scripture or by Christ to maintain literal, absolute inerrancy in every trivial thing and possible aspect. But we are, in the light of the evidence from Scripture, and specially of the teaching, usage, and attitude of Christ, required to hold and maintain the truthfulness, trustworthiness, Divine authority, and inviolability of the Oracles of God. The one may seem vulnerable or questionable, and, as against our common foes and their chief attack and purpose, it is not necessary to maintain it. The other is necessary, sufficient, invulnerable, and demonstrably established. Nothing less can possibly satisfy or come up to what is expressed in Christ's explicit words, most solemn teaching, and habitual usage; or account for His whole tone, treatment of, and attitude to Scripture as the Word of God. Any method of reconciling these with any theory of indefinite error or assertion of

untrustworthiness is so patently impracticable, and such a palpable perversion of them, that no one has seriously attempted to do it.

6. IT NULLIFIES THE STOCK AND MOST PLAUSIBLE ARGUMENT
AGAINST ABSOLUTE INERRANCY.

Further still, by taking our stand on this position we are able to foil, nullify, and make patent the irrelevancy of the stock, and plausible objection against the truth of Christianity from the existence of a single apparent discrepancy or error—proved or probable—by saying and being enabled to say that the evidence may not unquestionably quite amount to, or inevitably require us to hold, or demonstrate the absolute necessity of holding, that the Bible claims literal absolute inerrancy and precisian infallibility in every aspect of every despicable triviality. This of itself frees us from the necessity of maintaining that extremest position, or of even exposing the assertions and fallacies about the proof and effect of a single seeming error or discrepancy; for they are totally irrelevant as against our position.

7. IT RESTS OUR POSITION ON THE EMBODIED SUBSTANCE OF
SCRIPTURE, AND MEETS PREVALENT ATTACKS DIRECTLY

And, finally, it puts us in the absolutely impregnable position, based upon the essential substance of the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, endorsed and sealed with all the authority and Divinity of Christ, backed by all the evidences of Christianity free to be adduced in all their solid weight and resistless force, without doubt or diminution, and free from any question or hesitation as to what they really support and prove. It also enables us to make use of every kind of thing—even the minutæ, without committing us dogmatically to literal and absolute inerrancy. It enables us to show the truth and reliability of Scripture in small points, and thus has the same practical effect and use as the theory of absolute inerrancy, without any of its disadvantages or questionableness; especially when we do not assail or deny absolute inerrancy, or assert that it is untenable, or admit that a single error has been proved beyond dispute or question. This position, too, enables us to meet fairly and squarely—yea, is both fitted and intended to do so—the current

attacks on the integrity, authority, and credibility of Scripture, which are mainly directed now, not against trivial points, but against the substance and often the essential parts and elements, in their own real nature and distinct purpose—even the ethical and religious substance and elements,—not even these or any single kind of thing being now exempted from fallibility or error. That this is in fact their real position and purpose is proved by their practical exemplifications and applications, even when adducing trivial discrepancies and apparent errors in minutiae. It is not merely or mainly to make out that the Bible has erred in these trifles in order to disprove absolute literal inerrancy that they would contend much for, nor should we care to contend with them were that the real question. The real aim is through these to discredit Scripture, by breaking down the barrier, in order to get a free hand and open course to traverse, sift, and sit in judgment on all Scripture,—specially its moral and religious teaching. But taking our stand on our guarded, proved, and Christ-endorsed position, we foil all this, and avoid numerous, endless side issues, and erect our Christian apologetic on clear, strong, and truly unassailable ground, divinely and eternally established. Yea, the Lord Most High Himself hath here established it for ever.

THE THREE POSITIONS COMPARED APOLOGETICALLY.

The three theories and positions that have thus far been compared apologetically are :—*First*. Absolute and literal inerrancy in everything, point, word, and aspect of Holy Scripture, as originally given, and when properly interpreted. This is the extreme right. *Second*. The indefinite erroneousness of Holy Scripture, in all parts, elements, and kinds of things ; but yet a book or literature that contains somewhere or other, somehow or other, some kind of Revelation or another, which everyone must find out in some way or another for himself ! This is the extreme left. *Third*. The thorough truthfulness, entire trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture, as originally given, when truly interpreted in the sense intended, within the reasonable limits of the use of language. This is the sure and strong middle.

The first and third have much in common, and are not in anything necessarily opposed to each other, and mutually

strengthen and support each other. The third claims for itself all that can validly be advanced in favour of the first, and has some strong arguments and weighty considerations peculiar to itself. They both go in the same direction, towards the upholding of Scripture in its integrity, as the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and life ; only that the third does not go quite so far, or attempt to prove quite so much as the first—it being thought not wise or best to advance the position of final defence of the Christian faith quite so far, lest it should seem extreme, or appear to prove too much ; and thus unwisely expose the whole defence to a more plausible and diversified attack ;—especially when that is not required either to meet the assailants of Scripture in their main position and real contention, or to come up to what is so demonstrably necessitated by the claim of Scripture, so indisputably endorsed by the authority of Christ.

But the third does not assert or imply that the first, though not deemed the wisest, strongest, or best position for the final defence of the Christian faith, is wrong or untenable. On the contrary, it holds the reverse, and declares it to be incomparably stronger than the second, as against the sceptic, and actually uses it as a good and defensible support or first line for itself ; and utilises everything that can be validly advanced from that position as a cover, defence, and support of its own. And, so far as it avails, the first is warranted in doing the same with the third. Therefore, these two, though they may be placed in comparison and contrast, should never be put in antagonism to each other, but both should be opposed, each from its own standpoint and in its own way, to the positions of their common foes.

The first and second come, not into contrast merely, but into full and direct contradiction to each other. The first says that Scripture is absolutely inerrant in everything and in every kind of thing. The second says it is not inerrant in any kind of thing, if in anything ; that it actually errs in every kind of thing—religion and morals not excepted, but specially emphasised ; and that in no kind of thing is it inerrant, not even in those most distinctive of Revelation. In comparing these two apologetically, and testing the strength of their respective positions for defence of the Christian faith against the assaults of unbelief,—which avowedly denies Revelation in Scripture, and the supernatural origin of the Bible and the Christian religion,—we found above, that there was

really no comparison when thoroughly examined ; and that, while the first had a tenable, and ultimately defensible position, in which they could defend themselves and their faith for ever, as they have done for centuries against all the assaults of Rationalism and scepticism,—at least so as to render it impossible for their opponents to demonstrate the untenableness of their position or to disprove it. The second has really no valid defence at all, nor anything definite to defend ; and on their principles, and from their position, with their own weapons, the sceptic can speedily pulverise them, and leave them not one inch of foothold, for defence of the faith they profess to hold, and of which they vainly fancied they were the only wise defenders, till on their own principles, and with their own weapons, the sceptic gives them this rude awakening.

If, compared with the first, the second is so hopelessly weak and worthless, then, in comparison with the third—the stronger and more guarded position—the second is, of course, as seen already, of sheer logical necessity, simply nowhere. In what remains of this chapter it is with these two mainly we shall deal ; only giving further a summary at the end of what, from the third and best position, may be said finally to the sceptic in defence of the Christian faith. True, the second combines with the first and the third as against the sceptic, who denies Revelation and the supernatural, and rejects Scripture and Christianity altogether, while they all profess to hold Revelation and the Christian faith in some way. The supporters of the second would not choose to oppose and assail the absolute inerrancy merely to expose the apparent discrepancies or errors in trivial things, but they do so simply because it paves the way for holding and acting on the principle of indefinite erroneousness, and applying it throughout Scripture in every kind of thing. And the supporters of the third, although they might not admit the other, would not care to contend against the second, were their denial of inerrancy limited to trivialities.

II. COMPARISON APOLOGETICALLY OF THE TWO MAIN ANTAGONISTIC POSITIONS—INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS AND THOROUGH TRUTHFULNESS.

So that the two main opposing views meet and conflict in full antagonism and direct contradiction on the main and momentous

issues, whether all Scripture, as such, is true, trustworthy, and Divinely authoritative, or whether it is errant and erroneous in every kind of thing. The one holds mainly the former, the other teaches and implies the latter. The one takes the affirmative, and the other the negative, on this vital and supreme issue ; and that, too, in such a way that, if the one is true, the other must be false. The one maintains that the Bible as such is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority in every kind of thing. The other teaches that it is errant, and has erred in every kind of thing. The one holds that there is no kind of thing in which Scripture is not trustworthy ; the other holds that there is no kind of thing in which it is not more or less errant and untrustworthy. The one declares its truthfulness and reliability in every kind of thing ; the other declares its erroneousness and unreliability in any kind of thing. I say "every" or "any" *kind* of thing, and I do so advisedly ; because the errorists admit and teach that there are some individual things in which the Bible is or may be true and reliable, without, however, telling us precisely what these are, or how they are to be surely ascertained. But when they are pressed to specify in detail what the things or kinds of things are in which the Bible is so, it appears that there is no specific *kind* of thing in which they are prepared to declare or admit that it is universally true, trustworthy, and authoritative, not even in its moral or religious teaching, or in anything distinctive of Revelation.

Some of them may admit and teach that it is true and inerrant in some particular items or things belonging to the category of the ethical or religious ; but they do not admit but deny that it is true, reliable, and authoritative in *all* those kinds of things—in *everything* belonging to the category of the moral and religious. In fact, they usually produce examples from these first, and most urgently, as the evidence that it is not truthful and trustworthy.¹ So that there is no *kind* of thing, although there may be particular items, of which, as a class, truthfulness, trustworthiness, or Divine authority is predicated or predicable. In full and direct contradiction of this, the upholders of the Bible claim maintain, not only that there are some kinds of things in which Scripture is true and trustworthy, but that it is so in every kind of thing, and that there is no kind of thing in which it is not so. And although they may not care to contend, like the supporters of

¹ See Dr. Horton, Dr. Ladd, Dr. Farrar.

absolute inerrancy, that in every trivial item, in every kind of thing which may not affect the substance of Scripture, that it is absolutely and perfectly correct and literally accurate or scientifically precise,—which, as a popular book, the Bible does not profess to be ; and although they distinctly decline to take their stand for the defence of the Christian faith against scepticism on that precisian, narrow, and negative ground ; yet they do not admit that the errorists have so demonstrated even one single certain error as to put it beyond the possibility of doubt or question,—that in asserting they have proved one error they may not have erred themselves, or that their allegation is absolutely and unquestionably infallible. In short, they leave that meagre, miserable margin of despicable triviality open to discussion. Hitherto the errorists, even in that outer fringe, have not yet demonstrated anything requiring serious consideration, or proved beyond dispute one demonstrable error in Scripture as originally given. Even in the Scriptures, as we have them, the question is still a matter of doubtful disputation, or at least possibly open to question, and not so demonstrated as to preclude further discussion, possible discovery, explanation, or investigation. So many things that were supposed to have been proved errors, have especially, by recent discovery, been *disproved*, and shown to be mistakes of the allegers of the errors—that it is not utterly unreasonable, if not probable, to suppose or hope that all others may also vanish, or be reduced to practical nullity, in the progress of research and the possibilities of discovery.

As with the truth and trustworthiness, so with the Divine authority of the Bible, the two theories come into sharp and striking conflict. The one upholds the thorough truthfulness and Divine authority of all Scripture as originally given, when truly interpreted in the sense God intended. The other teaches its indefinite erroneousness, and denies that all Scripture is of Divine authority,—as it is impossible a God of truth and righteousness could give His sanction to error or wrong. Nor on this principle can Divine authority be given with certainty to any specific thing or kind of thing ; for it is only what “finds” men that is held to have any authority ; and as that varies in each, nothing distinctively Christian can with absolute assurance be said to have Divine authority ; and whatever authority anything

might get, it would only be what the individual mind may choose to give it. So that the objective Word of God would be deprived of all independent or Divine authority. Therefore, the one attributes Divine authority to all ; the other does not and cannot ascribe it to any Scripture.¹

¹ In the Appendix there is a brief outline of the apologetic value of the truthfulness in small points, and even the minute accuracy of Scripture, along some leading lines of Christian evidence.

NOTE.—Dr. Westcott, in explaining difficulties, says : “ Even in those passages which present the greatest difficulties, there are traces of unrecorded facts which, if known fully, would probably explain the whole. And besides all this there are so many tokens of unrecorded facts in the brief summaries which are preserved, that no argument can be based upon apparent discrepancies sufficient to prove the existence of absolute error ” (*Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, pp. 380, 400).

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEFENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH FROM THE STANDPOINT OF CHRIST.

IT now remains only to give a brief outline of the defence of the Christian faith that may be made from our strong middle position.

THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE.

The first line has been given above, in showing the defence that can be made even from the extreme position of absolute inerrancy. Though we have emphatically declined, and think it unwise, to take our stand for the defence of our faith in that position, it has, as shown, been well maintained for ages; and scepticism has till this hour been baffled to demonstrate its untenableness. But the very fact that such a claim for the Bible could be made and so long upheld, in face of the most bitter and searching criticism, is itself a strong positive argument for the faith, and constitutes weighty evidence for the truth and Divine origin of Christianity, which should persuade every open mind, and impress even a candid sceptic. For of no other ancient book or religious literature could such a claim for one moment be seriously pretended, as is notorious and patent on inspection of the cosmogonies, theologies, and other conceptions of heathen religious writings, or of the books even of related religious writers on the same subjects;—as the writings of Josephus and Philo compared with the O.T., or of the Apostolic Fathers with the N.T.;—or of that best theological work of classic antiquity, Cicero's *De natura Deorum*, with the theology of the N.T., or his *De Officiis* with its ethics, to say nothing of the grotesque absurdities of Oriental religious literature.¹ These well-known facts, in which

¹ See Appendix.

the Bible truth and reasonableness stand out in such striking contrast to all other ancient literature, every candid sceptic should face ; and they demand a cause adequate to explain them. The Christian gives supernatural inspiration as his explanation ; and thereby accords with the claim of Scripture, and satisfies the principles of philosophy ; and is thus justified by both reason and Revelation. And since scepticism and rationalism have utterly failed to give any other adequate cause, the Christian view holds the field on the strictest principles of the inductive philosophy.

Further, this implies that the Bible is a supernatural Revelation. For the nature of many of the truths revealed is such as were never discovered or discoverable by mere human reason. Such truths as the Bible conception of God, the Trinity, the fatherhood of God, the origin of the universe and the creation of the world, and God's relation to it, as a God immanent in all, yet transcendent over all ; the origin and fall of man, free grace, election, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit ; justification, adoption, and sanctification by faith ; the resurrection of the dead, the future life, and judgment to come—are manifestly such as to be known must be revealed, as they express the gracious will of God ;—though they may when revealed be verifiable in Christian experience. And since these are revealed in Scripture and have been largely verified in Christian life, this proves the truth and Divine origin of the Bible and the Christian faith.

THE SECOND AND SURE LINE OF DEFENCE.

All this gains immensely increased force and unanswerableness when we take our stand, not in the position of absolute inerrancy, but of the simple truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture ;—freed as it is of all the doubtful disputations and plausible objections that may be made in small points ; and when the main weight of the argument is laid, by wise apologists, not upon minutiae, though these, too, have their place and value, but upon the great verities and substance which of themselves are conclusive proof of the truth and Divine origin of the religion of the Bible. For if, on the extremest outposts of the Christian defence, Scepticism has for ages been baffled to prove the position untenable, what hope is there of its ever reach-

ing and overthrowing the main position, or capturing the citadel? If, indeed, the general truthfulness of the Bible is credible, or its trustworthiness even in its main substance is maintainable, then, its supernatural origin, and the truth of the Christian faith, are proved. And what candid mind can deny this in the light of the established facts, and the ever-growing corroborations from research; and above all, from the ever-deepening and extending verifications of Christian experience;—which even such a scientist as Romanes¹ was convinced by, and confessed to be as well established facts in spiritual life as any in physical life; and proved, too, on the testimony of the most intelligent and upright people in the most enlightened nations of the world in all ages. This led him, simply as a scientist, opening his mind to decisive evidence, to abandon his scepticism, and to refute his own sceptical writings; and he then found the great Christian verities true in his own experience, and died in the faith which he had, in his unscientific unbelief, sought to destroy. All scientific sceptics would do well to ponder this, and to face these facts; and if they would only test the great Christian verities by personal experience, they, too, would find that they can remain true scientists best by becoming real Christians, and that Bible Christianity is the truest science, and the profoundest philosophy.

WHAT THE SCEPTIC HAS TO FACE AND ANSWER.

And when it is asked what are some of the chief facts the sceptic has to face, and some of the main things he has to prove and disprove, and some of the leading lines of evidence and argument he has to answer, he may well—like Messina, when he faced the three famous lines of Torras Vedras formed by the genius of Wellington, and defended by the heroes of a hundred battles—be excused for abandoning the attack in the hopelessness of despair.

I. HE HAS TO PROVE THE OUTER DEFENCE UNTENABLE.

He has to prove the first line of defence, as given above, untenable, and to answer all the evidence by which it has been maintained for ages, which Scepticism has failed to do after nearly two thousand years of virulent and persistent attempt.

¹ Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion*.

II. HE HAS TO *DISPROVE* THE TRUTHFULNESS, TRUSTWORTHINESS, AND DIVINE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

He has to *disprove* the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture, and to answer all the evidence by which it is established. When he has been baffled to prove untenable even the outer line of inerrancy, how hopeless is it to overthrow this second and far stronger line. For truth and Divinity are stamped on every page, disclosed in every portion, and radiated in every revelation; evidenced in its unity and harmony though written by forty different authors in many lands, during sixteen hundred years; confirmed by its harmony with the laws of nature, the principles of providence, and the facts of history; corroborated by its increasingly established accordance with the discoveries of science and the findings of research,¹—the agreements vastly exceeding in number and importance any apparent differences; established by its concord with the surest conclusions of right reason, and the profoundest principles of sound philosophy; proved by its self-evidencing power in the human mind; certified by its tested adaptation to the nature and the needs of man; demonstrated by its salutary effects in the life and character of men and nations; verified beyond dispute in the deepest and truest ethical and spiritual experience of the race; settled as a moral certainty and unquestionable fact by the testimony of the Spirit in the consciousness of the believer and the Church in every land and age; and is finally climaxed, crowned, and eternally assured by the life and character, teaching and resurrection of the Son of God, as in the name of Godhead He endorsed the Bible with His most solemn sanction, and sealed it with His Divine authority.

The Bible is, indeed, itself the best evidence of its Divine origin, truth, and authority. The impression that the simple reading of it makes upon every candid mind is strong evidence of its truth, trustworthiness, and Divine authority. Who that has read the Bible with any care has not been impressed with its tone of truth, its ring of reality, its air of veracity, its note of reliability, and the voice of Divine authority pervading all? There is, as in the presence of an honest and intelligent man, a tone of sincerity, a frank transparency, a felt uprightness

¹ See Appendix.

that beget confidence, carry conviction, and make you feel that you are with a truthful and trustworthy guide. It is also pervaded by an atmosphere of eternity, a voice of God, a vastness of vision, a grandeur of conception, an elevation of ideal, a tone of righteousness, a spirit of holiness, a sublimity of thought, a majesty of style, a simplicity of expression, a penetrative power, a quickening vitality, a searching potency, a transforming force, an upholding strength, an inspiring energy, an ennobling spirit, a cheering efficacy and healing virtue, a most tender mercy and a Divine love,—which makes the earnest reader feel in the very presence of God, as if listening to the voice of the Eternal, making the very awe of the Almighty creep over the sensitive spirit, and the love of the Everlasting Father sink down into the responsive heart, constraining worship, love, and praise. It possesses, too, a perennial freshness, everlasting interest, infinite suggestiveness, and marvellous fascination to the spiritual mind, which only the Word of the Eternal God could have; while it alone provides the perfect ethical and religious standard for the race; and more vital still, it alone supplies the motive power and spiritual force sufficient to attain that standard, by rooting every element of moral life and duty in some corresponding element of Christian doctrine, and bringing every believer into vivifying union in Christ with the Divine source of moral life and spiritual power.

III. HE HAS TO ANSWER AND ANNIHILATE THE WHOLE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

All this is deepened, and becomes an assured conviction as it is carefully studied and seen how one part blends with and completes the other,—forming together a wondrous, God-given, man-written whole, declared to be the Word of God, and proved to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority along each leading line of Christian evidence.

1. There is the evidence from the undesigned coincidences¹ of Scripture, in which the statements and allusions of independent writers, without any collusion, so harmonise and fit into each other, often even in minutiae, as to prove the truth and reliability of both,—as between the Acts of the Apostles and

¹ See Paley and Blunt, and Appendix.

the Epistles of Paul: the complementary and confirmatory character of various parts of the Bible,—as in the diverse and independent records of Christ's life in the Gospels, in which it is forcibly felt that though there are four biographies, there is but one unique life and harmonious character.¹

2. The comparative historical evidence, seen in the agreements between the sacred and secular histories, as between the Gospels or the Acts and the histories of Tacitus and Suetonius.²

3. The evidence from Archæology, which gives such striking and ever-growing corroborations of the truth, and even minute accuracy, of the Bible: and which has come so opportunely to disprove by hard, indisputable facts, the imagined results of false criticism, which tended to discredit Scripture.³

4. The evidence from the harmony between Scripture and Science and Philosophy in large parts and leading lines,—the agreements in the chief facts and elements far outweighing any paltry differences.

5. The argument from the organic Unity, in diversity, of the Bible; though written by so many different writers, during many ages, in many lands, in divers portions and manners, yet forming one unique organic whole, requiring one Divine, while showing a diversified human, authorship.

6. The evidence from Miracles, which attested the Divine mission and message of those who in the name and by the power of God wrought them; and proved the Divine origin and character of their religion,—especially the supreme miracle of the resurrection, the best established fact in history.

7. The evidence from Prophecy, which shows that the prophets were the organs of God in all they said and wrote; as was proved by the fulfilments of their prophecies, sometimes to precise details,—as seen in the history of Israel and the prophecies about Christ—the burden of the Bible,—where the most marvellous and literal fulfilments are established beyond dispute, as every Bible reader knows, and even sceptics have been constrained to own.

8. The moral evidence from the proved adaptation of the

¹ See Westcott's *Introduction to the Gospels*.

² See Rawlinson and Maclear.

³ See Sayce and countless writers on the *Evidence from the Monuments*, Appendix.

Bible and the Gospel to the nature and the needs of man,—enlightening and enlarging the mind, quickening and pacifying the conscience, satisfying and entendering the heart, ruling and strengthening the will, inspiring and empowering the spirit, arousing and developing the entire mental and moral energies and activities, ennobling and transforming the whole man; and meeting his needs as a creature, by fellowship with a faithful Creator; as a sinner, by revealing an all-sufficient Saviour, as an heir of immortality, by giving a hope that is full of glory;—a religion that has shown its adaptability to all peoples, conditions, and ages,—the only religion proved fit to be universal and adaptive, progressive and everlasting.¹

9. The historical evidence, which shows that wherever the Bible and the Gospel have gone and been received, the Christianity of Christ has proved itself the wisdom and the power of God unto men's salvation. By it men and nations have risen and grown intellectually, morally, spiritually, nationally—every way. The moral reformer of men, the elevator of woman, the guardian of children, the life of home, the raiser of society, the foe of slavery, the friend of freedom, the backbone of righteousness, the heart of love, the bond of brotherhood, the soul of philanthropy, and the spring of progress,—it has ever been. In virtue of its Divine power, it made rapid and resistless progress without arms, or wealth, or influence, but in face of them, and in spite of persecution widespread, severe, and prolonged for ages.

10. The collateral evidence from confirmatory truths in other religions so far as true, though in imperfect fragments; and analogous truths in science and philosophy, though only broken lights of the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings;—even evolution itself supplying many analogies in the development of natural life, to the progress in Revelation, growth in grace of the godly man, and the origin, development, and far-reaching promise and potency of the spiritual life in the believer in Him who is the life and the light of men.²

11. The experimental evidence shown in the power of God's Word and the truth of the Gospel over men's minds; and

¹ See Dr. Chalmers' *Evidences and Bridgewater Treatise*.

² See Butler's *Analogy*; Mr. Gladstone, *Subsidiary Studies*; Professor Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, etc.

specially in the testimony of the Spirit by and with the truth in the consciousness of believers, and in the ever-growing experience of the living Christian,—facts as sure and unquestionable in spiritual life as any in physical life, and which the Christian can no more question than he can his own existence, and which being certified on personal verification by multitudes of the most intelligent and upright men in all lands and ages, cannot be denied without denying the veracity of consciousness, which means absolute Scepticism, which is absolute absurdity.¹ Even the unbelief of Scepticism itself confirms the truth of Scripture ; for it declares, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2¹⁴) ; —a statement as true to fact as it is profound in philosophy, for it requires a Spirit-opened organ of spiritual vision to see spiritual things.

THE SUPREME EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY IS CHRIST.

12. The supreme evidence of Christianity is from the character and life, teaching and work, influence and Personality of Jesus Christ, a character that stands out peerlessly alone among all the sons of men,—a lonely moral splendour in the history of the race, as even Scepticism has been constrained to own. A life that even in the brief records of it in the Gospels has evoked the homage of the world, and thrilled humanity with the ideals and possibilities it may attain in Him its typical head, and a life that never could have been written unless it had been lived ; for even unbelief has owned that it required a Christ to conceive a Christ. A teaching that, in the fragments of it we possess, so far transcends all other teaching in originality and profundity, graciousness and power, that men of every age and race have exclaimed, “Never man spake like this man,” even cold unbelief owning Him as *facile princeps* the religious genius of the race. A work that makes the work of all others dwindle into insignificance,—which unites God with man, heaven with earth, time with eternity, the creature with the Creator, and binds the whole moral and material universe—all beings, things,

¹ See Principal William Cunningham’s *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* ; Dr. W. Robertson Smith’s *O.T. in the Jewish Church*.

events—into a unity in Himself and all to God ; and thus fulfils the purpose of the ages by which round the whole world “is bound by gold chains about the feet of God,” and looks forward to that “far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves.” An influence that is confessedly unique, and ever increases with the growing years, and proves Him to be in veritable fact the Father (Creator) of the ages, the moral magnet of mankind, the regenerator of the race, the elevator and transformer of all,—the light of the world, the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings. A personality that possesses simply a Divine fascination to those who have seen His glory—the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Revealer of God, making God known as the Father as never known before, thus bringing men into such a new climate of love as men had never breathed till then. The Redeemer of men—the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, thus meeting the first and deepest needs of sinful men, and fructifying them in all good. The Prince of Life, and therefore able to satisfy the deepest longings of the human soul by making us partakers of the life eternal in Him its fountain. The Light of men, and, therefore, fit to guide their feet into the way of life, and to secure that “he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” The Prince of Peace, whose principles and spirit, so far as they have entered into the life of men and nations, have tended to peace on earth, goodwill among men, as shown of old in “God’s truce,” which for two centuries brought peace to Christendom, and is exhibited in recent times in courts of arbitration, peace societies, and European concerts of peace that have yielded blessed fruits of peace on earth, and herald the dawn of a new era of peace and brotherhood ; and which as His spirit is more fully imbibed, and His principles of love and helpfulness are applied, will yet yield infinitely greater, richer fruits, till wars shall cease, and Peace shall over all the world her Christ-born blessings bring. The Man of Sorrows, who can, therefore, enter in life’s supreme crises the home shadowed with death or stricken with sorrow, when medical skill leaves it in despair, and science silent brings no light, and even love itself can only wait and weep,—and there as the Man of Sorrows and the Prince of comforters ministers consolation unspeakable to the heart and sheds amid the shadows of death the light full of glory, breathing into the

departing spirit; and with a radiance all its own, casts light unique upon the mystery of suffering by showing in His own experience that suffering is the means to perfection, the path to glory, and the medium through which He has, by taking on Himself, for our sins, suffering in body and soul in its most awful forms and measure, so manifested the love of God to sinful men, by giving His Son to die for us, as without suffering, even God could not otherwise have done; so that the sufferings of the Cross for our salvation have become the means of the most wondrous revelation of the love of God the universe has ever witnessed. The Resurrection and the Life, who, by His victory as the Son of Man over death and grave, became the pledge, first-fruits, and type of the victory and glory of them that sleep, and thus

“He takes its terrors from the grave,
And gilds the bed of death with light.”

The Son of Man and the Son of God, uniting in His unique Personality a perfect human with a perfect Divine nature, He thus, as the God-man, in the great mystery of Godliness—God manifest in the flesh, unites man and God, matter and spirit, the creature and the Creator, and binds the universe of Being into a wondrous unity in Himself; and as the supreme uniting link in Being's endless chain—its centre, end, and glory—represents God to man and man to God, the Creator to the creature and the creature to the Creator. He thus fulfils the prophecies of Revelation in its ever-growing brightness, the promises of Life in its ever-advancing anticipations, and the purpose of the ages in creation, providence, and redemption, in its forward marchings, and thereby supplies the key for the solution of the profoundest problems of life and destiny, and alone leads us into the secret of the mysteries of the universe,—showing the profound philosophy as well as the true piety and exquisite poetry of the words—

“And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds.
More strong than all poetic thought,
Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave:
Or those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.”

CHRIST BY THE BIBLE IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Round Christ all the truths of Revelation cluster, as do the planets round the sun. On Him all the hopes and promises hang, as do the branches, leaves, and fruit upon the tree. To Him all the types and rites, histories and precepts, point, as does the needle to the pole. For Him the patriarchs hoped, of Him the prophets spake, to Him the psalmists sang, from age to age, as light more clearly shone, and hope more hopeful grew. He is the author and giver as well as the theme of Revelation, thus He is the light of Scripture, and by Scripture how largely is He the "light of the world"! What were the world without the light that has come from the Bible, and the books and thoughts, the movements and achievements that have sprung from it, or been aided by its light? Take Revelation with all the light it has for millenniums diffused in the minds and shed upon the lives of men, and what have you left? an awful void—a midnight darkness—a world's despair! By it science has been aided in its forward march to all the wondrous discoveries it has made. From it philosophy has derived its profoundest principles, surest guidance, and best results. Poetry has in it sought its grandest themes. Painting has from it taken its sublimest subjects. Art has therein obtained its highest ideals. Music has through it received its divinest inspirations. Literature has in it found its greatest thoughts, through it been prompted to its highest efforts, and by it made its sublimest achievements. Through its light, civilization has marched on apace. By its impulse the cultivation of the globe makes rapid progress. From its love philanthropy goes forth on angel wing, with pitying heart and tender hand, to ease the pains of suffering, to relieve the wants of poverty, and to dry the tears of sorrow. Through its spirit, woman has been raised from her long, lasting degradation to her proper place as the companion of man and the child of God.

By its influence slavery has been chased from the abodes of civilized men, and forced to hide its head beneath the decks of pirate ships, or skulk away amid untraversed wilds, where Bible light has never shone, or Christian power has not yet come. And even war itself, that dark and fiend-like game, has had its glory turned to shame, its triumphs tarnished by the blood that was shed, not to vanquish, but to save, and its very

sinews silently paralysed by the diffusion of the spirit of Him who returned good for evil, blessing for cursing, and who will yet by the love His light will infuse into them, lead men all the world over to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Thus Christ is by Scripture "The light of the world"; and, therefore, those who reject the Bible, or despise the Christ, would banish man's greatest friend, extinguish earth's brightest luminary, and leave us in the darkness that has no dawn.

CHRIST BY THE CROSS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.

Christ's power by the Cross is proved by the unquestionable facts of history, and in the experience of countless myriads during all the ages. For as soon as Christ crucified was lifted up on Calvary Cross, a dying thief saw His glory, and found salvation through His blood; a Roman centurion felt its power, and owned His Deity. Crowds coming out from Jerusalem smote their breasts in penitence, and returned to pray. The earth shook to express its redemption. The rocks rent to shout their joy. The graves opened to herald His triumph. Darkness fled, its reign abolished. Hell trembled, its doom sealed. Heaven rang Jubilee, its grace triumphant.

The moral wonders were greater than the physical.

No sooner was the bleeding banner unfurled in Pentecostal power in long impenitent Jerusalem than it pierced the heart of thousands, and created the Christian Church. Borne in the trembling hands of fleeing saints, it attracted by its resistless spell multitudes over all Judea; nor could even old Samaria, so long implacable and superstitious, resist its mysterious power, or refuse to swell its triumph. It marched northward through Decapolis to Damascus, scattering the darkness of Galilee of the nations, and captivating thousands of the children of Israel and the sons of Syria in its onward course. It moved westward next, and exerting its all drawing potency over Gentiles in the house of Cornelius, settled itself in Cæsarea, bringing many in the famous city that bore great Cæsar's name to own its power. Pushing northward, westward still, it put forth its magnetic efficacy in the ancient empire of Phœnicia, bringing Tyre and Sidon, the seat of so many idolatries, under its salutary sway. It hastened eastward soon to the great Syrian cities, and from Antioch as a

centre, swept rapidly onward through the ancient seats of the great Oriental empires of Assyria, Persia, and Babylonia, till it penetrated the depths of India and climbed the walls of China, gathering countless trophies of its benign attractive force over all the hoary regions of antiquity. It marched southward next, through Egypt, Ethiopia, and the darker depths of Africa, attracting the swarthy tribes of the desert and the long cursed children of Ham, as well as the descendants of Shem, to its all-conquering standard. It pressed westward then to the islands of the ocean and the great cities of Asia Minor, till, answering the cry from Macedonia, it reached Athens, the seat of the world's philosophy, and Rome, the centre of the world's power, gathering multitudes under its magnetic banner. Sweeping westward, northward still, it planted itself in Spain, France, Germany, and was at length unfurled to the Atlantic breeze on the shores of the British Isles—proving itself to be wherever it was proclaimed the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation.

When, three centuries after its manifestation, Christianity stood face to face with heathenism in mortal conflict on the field of battle, Constantine, in a dream of the night, saw erected in the sky a cross with the words, "By this conquer," inscribed beneath it; and interpreting the sign aright, he on the following morning pulled down the Roman eagle, and unfurled the banner of the Cross, and ere the evening of that memorable day had closed, the Christian soldiers of Constantine under it had vanquished heathenism upon the field of battle and placed a Christian emperor upon the throne of the Cæsars. When a century and a half later the ancient empire of Rome was by the overpowering rush of the Northern Gothic nations broken into pieces, the power of the Gospel conquered the conquerers, saved the nations from mutual destruction, and raised up that wondrous confederation of Christian nations during the Middle Ages which, by the wars of the Crusades, and other much wiser things, broke the power of the relentless Turk, and has made the crescent ever since wane before the ascendant power of the Cross. When at the Reformation it was, after being crusted over by Romish superstitions for centuries, once more brought clearly forth, its old, reviving, salutary power was manifested anew o'er many lands, in million hearts, calling the nations to penitence, the Church to songs, and the world to light, liberty, and brotherhood.

Nor have its conquests ceased during the centuries since. For it crossed the Atlantic in the *May Flower* with the Puritans of England, and founded there the mighty empire of the New World. It rallied the Covenanters of Scotland age after age in their great struggle for Christ's crown and kingdom; so that by such sacrifices, and by the influences of such mighty movements in our day as have sprung from these, the Church of Christ the world over should soon be set free from the thralldom of the State, and ushered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. A century ago it originated, by its heart-moving power, modern missions to the heathen, which, under the standard of the Cross, are going forth over all the climes of the earth, making those places of our globe which were the habitations of horrid cruelty jubilant with light and gladness. And from these facts of the past, as well as Bible prophecies of the future, the events of the present, and the nature of the thing, we can confidently predict that its power will never cease, and its conquests never end, and its glory never wane, till round this healing standard all the ransomed nations gather, and a jubilant Church shall sing.

Nor is this power of the Gospel like the power of other religions, limited to one place—Hinduism to India, Confucianism to China, Mahometanism to the countries over which the sword of its founder at first gave it sway. These have never gone forth beyond the confines of their original localities. Christianity with the Gospel has, from the narrow confines of Palestine, gone round the world, has proved itself adapted to all mankind, and is the only religion making progress on the earth to-day. The power of the Gospel is not confined to one kind of mind, Oriental or Western, educated or unsophisticated, active or contemplative, but is mighty over all. It is not limited to one class of society, rich or poor, urban or rustic, military or civilian, but extends to each. It is applicable to and has exerted its power over all relations of life, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. It is adapted for and has shown its power over young and old, male and female, bond and free, in all times and circumstances, and amid all the changes and upheavals of men and nations. It retained its power and adjusted its agencies with little effort to that strange condition of things that followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, adapting itself to the state of the nations that arose out of it, and has found itself

ever able to meet the varying exigencies and revolutions of the Empires that have been formed since. In every advance of civilisation, every change of the political state of the world, every stage of progress in learning or discovery ; in every advance of thought, every increase in knowledge, every march in life, it has ever been able to meet the change, lead the way, and utilise all.

Nor did it make its achievements by the help or favour of the wealth, arms, or philosophy of the nations of antiquity, but in spite of their opposition, and in face of the fiercest persecutions. Nor did it pander to the opinions or minister to the passions of mankind ; but, on the contrary, restrained and condemned them, though a proud and demoralised world was ill-prepared to bear it. Nor did it merely convert them to its doctrine, but raised them to its high and holy morality. It made the cruel, kind ; the intemperate, sober ; the licentious, pure ; the implacable, forgiving ; the unjust, upright ; the mean, noble ; the avaricious, liberal ; the lying, truthful ; the deceitful, trustworthy ; the bad, good ; the carnal, spiritual ; the sinner, a saint.

Nor did it leave the nations as it found them. It raised long-degraded, much-abused woman to a level with man as a child of God, and an heir of heaven. It broke the neck of slavery by teaching that man was made in the image of God, and every Christian a freeman whom the Son made free. It even cut the sinews of war by declaring it a violation of the law of love, and branding it as human nature's darkest, bloodiest blot, which the Gospel will yet banish from the world as the work of fiends, and which the crucified Christ will terminate at length when He comes to reign as king of righteousness and peace over a redeemed humanity, as they hang the trumpet in the hall and study war no more. And it infused new life-blood into the heart of a dying world, and led men forward in that march of progress which shall yet usher in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

CHRIST IN CHRISTIANITY THE HOPE OF THE WORLD.

The vast and brilliant array of evidence for the Divine origin and authority of the Bible and the Christian faith, of which the above and all before is but the merest outline, should be more

than sufficient to satisfy every unprejudiced mind. The testimony is not only satisfying but triumphant:—whether we look at the unique character and work, teaching and influence of its Founder, or at the sublime religion and unique morality that it teaches; at the miracles by which at its origin it was attested, or the fulfilled prophecies by which it was subsequently confirmed; at the internal marks of credibility it possesses, and the undesigned coincidences between various parts, or the stamp of truthfulness and the tone of reality that ever pervade it; at the agreement of the Bible with secular historians, or the corroborations of it by archaeology and research; at the outstanding harmony between its statements and the findings of science and philosophy, or the analogy between its great doctrines and truths from other sources of knowledge; at the organic unity and symmetry of Scripture, or the oneness of its whole system of doctrine.

It is the same when we pass from a theoretic to a practical view:—At the beneficent nature and salutary design of the Gospel, or the simplicity and effectiveness of the means by which it comes into operation; at the world-wide character of its beneficial effects, or the great variety of the subjects of its power; at the unparalleled supremacy it has held through all the ages, or its infinite power of adaptation to the ever-changing conditions of men and nations; at the felt accordance between what the Bible declares we are and what we find ourselves to be, or the realised correspondence between what the Gospel offers and we feel ourselves to need; at the convincing power of the truth naturally on the minds of men generally, or the special effectiveness of it in the consciousness of believers by the testimony of the Spirit.

These truths must have come from God that have been the means of bringing peace to the conscience, joy to the heart, renewal to the will, and satisfaction to the mind; of imparting courage to the faint, hope to the despairing, consolation to the afflicted, and comfort to the dying; of making the proud humble, the revengeful forgiving, and the savage docile as a child; of changing the publican into the preacher, the harlot into the holy woman, and the prodigal into the noble son; of converting the prejudiced man into the firm believer, the scoffer into the strenuous supporter, and the persecutor into the seraphic apostle. That religion must have been Divine that originated among a

despised, abominated race ; that was humbling to human pride, and laid galling restraint upon human passion ; that went directly in the teeth of the philosophy and the spirit of the times, and which itself was to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness ; that demanded the unconditional surrender of every other religion in the world,—divinely instituted Judaism as well as the scarcely less venerable systems of paganism ; that professed to aim at absolute and universal dominion over the hearts and lives of men, tolerating no rival ; and that, notwithstanding all these disadvantages of the meanness of the place of its origin, the humbling nature of its doctrines, the apparent haughtiness of its claims, and the intolerance of its aims, should, in less than a century after its complete inauguration, have pushed its way into and settled itself in the great centres of the world's power, philosophy, and refinement,—not only without arms, learning, or wealth, but against them ; and should, in about three centuries, in spite of a persecution universal, severe, and protracted, have taken possession of the temples of the ejected deities, and the throne of the mistress of the world. And when we add to these the undeniable historical fact that nations and races have risen higher intellectually, morally, and politically in proportion as a pure and a living Christianity was prevalent among them, we can comprehend the full significance of our beloved Queen's words, who is reported to have said to the African prince, on presenting him with a Bible, "This is the secret of Britain's greatness." Surely then we can confidently affirm that no religion could do these things the Gospel has done unless it came from God.

Compared with the extent and the grandeur of these moral triumphs, the victories of the philosophy and arms of antiquity sink into insignificance. The standard of the Cross has been unfurled in many regions where the wings of the Roman eagle never flew, and where the fame of the sons of Greece was never heard. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, where are they ? where their venerable systems of wisdom and the glory of their greatness ? Gone, all gone for ever. The dust of ages sleeps upon their ruins, and Ichabod might have been written upon one and all of them centuries ago. But in the days of these kings the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom that can never be destroyed, which already has broken in pieces and consumed all these kingdoms

by the power of its truth, so that with the prophet we may fearlessly say, "It shall stand for ever." For surrounded with all the venerableness of antiquity, but with none of the infirmities of age, it has come down to us as the light and the life of the world, ever exhibiting fresh vigour, and ever gaining new victories as the ages roll. Greece, in her fabulous legends, could boast of an Orpheus, at the charming strains of whose lyre the cruel deities of hell were moved to pity, the savage beasts of the forest forgot their wildness and lay down charmed at his feet, the rapid rivers rushed backwards in their course at his enchanting strains, the trees of the forests bowed to do him homage, and the very mountains themselves moved to listen to his song. But Christianity can tell of "scenes surpassing fable and yet true, scenes of accomplished bliss," as she points to the wild son of the forest, whose heart and whose home were among the rangers of the wood, sitting along with the mightiest intellects of the species at the feet of the Saviour, and points with the finger of Faith to that bright period in the future when such a reformation will have taken place, through the power of her Gospel, in the hearts and lives of the various races of mankind, as that in the visions of ancient prophecy "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them" ; and

"One song employs all nations, and all cry,
'Worthy the Lamb, for He was slain for us,'
The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
Shout to each other, and mountain tops
From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

BOOK VI.

THE ESSENTIAL RATIONALISM OF ALL THEORIES OF THE INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. REASON OR REVELATION?



CHAPTER I.

THE AVOWEDLY AND PRACTICALLY RATIONAL- ISTIC THEORIES.

THE object of this Book is to show that all theories of partial inspiration, however they may differ from each other, are ultimately founded on, or spring from, one common root principle of the supremacy of reason over Revelation, practically tend to lessen our regard for, or to deprive us of, our old Bible of Divine Revelation, and logically result in supplanting it by a new Bible, whose ultimate principle and supreme authority is human reason,—a Bible, therefore, varying of necessity according to the ever-varying minds of various men. This new Bible has seemingly very obvious advantages. It is portable, for every man is his own Bible; and it can, therefore, be his constant companion. It is also very accommodating, for by habit, training, and dexterous management, it can be made to promise a perennial peace, and to give loose rein according to each man's dispositions, circumstances, or exigencies. And it is certainly very flexible, because to be true to itself it must change as the man changes. Thus in the course of the gradual or revolutionary changes of opinion and practice common to changeable man, it will at one time condemn what at another time it approves! A somewhat peculiar standard—a rather startling result!

It has, however, some real disadvantages. The peace is at

times disturbed by secret misgivings and monitions from within, whispering that after all there may be another Bible. Occasionally, too, in life's vicissitudes, the old, now rejected, though once prized Bible, supposed to be buried under the lore and logic of a false philosophy or a misleading criticism, consciously rises again from the dead, and fleeting, spectre-like, across the vision, and uttering its old solemn tones, haunts the devoted idolaters of reason with strange misgivings, and compels their unwilling ears to listen to its voice. And it has at least this very manifest disadvantage, that it deprives men of any real or authoritative standard of truth; for various and variable men will have, do have, and must have different, and even contradictory ideas of what is true and right; yea, frequently the same men have opposite views at different times: so that in attempting to replace the old Bible of Divine Revelation by human reason, dreaming thereby to get a better standard for a worse, it is actually found that they have exchanged a true, authoritative standard for none at all. I state this now, however, that all the opponents of the Bible claim may face the tendency, logical result, and inevitable end of their common root principle, and that even the most pronounced antagonist of Scripture supremacy may weigh well the consequences of rejecting the authority of the old Bible; and specially that those who believe they recognise its authority while denying its claim, may be led, in the light of such serious issues, to consider carefully the arguments that prove their theories to be essentially rationalistic, and to leave no logical resting-place short of standing with the most avowed advocates of the supremacy of reason over Revelation, with all the disastrous results.

The erroneous theories advanced as to Scripture are too numerous to be separately stated, far less refuted here, and for our present purpose this is unnecessary. For if it can be shown that they are all in principle ultimately reducible to one—rationalism; and if this common root can then be proved to be unreliable, false, and pernicious, the desired work may be more concisely as well as more effectively done than by a detailed refutation of each, or by advancing all that might be said against the various classes. For our purpose it will be sufficient to arrange the more outstanding of them under the following classes:—

I. THE AVOWEDLY RATIONALISTIC THEORIES.

Under this may be included—*First*. Modern Spiritualism as taught by Francis Newman and his followers, who maintain that a revelation of moral and spiritual truth by God to man is impossible; although the disciples' reception of this from their master shows that what they had declared to be impossible for God, they deemed possible for man!

Second. Materialism, the offspring of a peculiar form of materialistic philosophy fast hastening to its grave. It holds the mechanical theory of creation, banishes God from His universe after He has created matter and mind, endowed them with their respective properties and attributes, and placed them under the reign of fixed, inexorable laws that operate with all the unrelaxing unchangeableness of resistless fate. This practically atheistic theory renders impossible not only Revelation, but also Miracles, Prophecy, and Providence; and consequently requires the Bible to be a purely human production, which had no Divine influence exerted in its composition, and is destitute of any Divine authority in its teaching.

Third. Deism, as maintained by those who ostensibly admit a God and a providence, and do not explicitly deny the possibility of a revelation, but assert that the universe is governed by general changeless laws that preclude Divine interposition; and, therefore, contend that the only revelation possible is what may be produced by providential circumstances raising some men to a higher degree of religious knowledge and emotion than others.

Fourth. Anti-supernatural Mysticism, as represented in the theory of Morell and others. These maintain that the Christian revelation is merely the natural result of the special providential dispensation connected with the life of Christ; which, penetrating itself into the religious consciousness of that age, and specially of His followers, raised them to a higher religious life and spiritual elevation than was ever attained before or since; thus giving them intuitions of eternal verities, clearer, fuller, and higher than others. These truths were gradually, through the working of this new life, formulated or expressed in didactic form by the ordinary exercise of the reflective and logical faculties; and were ultimately embodied in our Scriptures, merely by the use of their natural gifts and acquirements, without any supernatural aid.

So far as Inspiration is concerned this class is substantially the same as the last. For while they might admit a kind of revelation, it could not be in any real sense supernatural; but only the natural result of proximity to Christ and participation in the new life He infused into humanity. And as to the origin and composition of the Scriptures,—the record of Revelation, with which Inspiration has distinctively to do, they assert that they were entirely a human product, neither requiring nor admitting of any supernatural influence whatever.

Fifth. Socinianism, as set forth by Priestley and others who on this question maintain that the Scripture writers were simply honest men, and competent witnesses, recording, like ordinary historians, facts and opinions, with all the usual liability to error in both. In regard to all these it is needless to argue that their Bible is reason, for they avow it; and Inspiration, in any proper sense, is altogether excluded by their express statements, as also by their whole principles and methods of treating religious subjects. Even if in any sense a *revelation* should be admitted by the least anti-Christian of these, it is a revelation without any supernatural power being exerted on the minds of the writers, and by which no supernatural truth is directly communicated;—a revelation purely the result of the natural influence of Christ's life on His followers' minds,—a revelation receiving all its authority, not from Divine origin or inspiration, but solely from its felt accordance with man's own consciousness;—a revelation which, as far as the record of it is concerned, was written without any supernatural aid, and possesses no Divine authority.

II. THE PRACTICALLY RATIONALISTIC THEORIES.

First. The theory of those who make both revelation and inspiration merely the natural effect of placing men with keen spiritual insight and deep sympathy with God in circumstances peculiarly favourable for observing God working in providence; and then being impelled, through the impressions thus received, to record their observations and convictions they have, simply by the exercise of their own natural gifts and attainments, produced the writings which being collected form our Bible. This is manifestly neither inspiration nor revelation in any recognised or scriptural sense, but something essentially different from both.

It is not revelation, for it precludes entirely what is the essential thing therein, even the direct and supernatural communication of truth to the mind of man by God. As to Inspiration, which is specially for the expression of Divine truth, there is nothing of this in it ; but the whole theory is manifestly constructed in order to teach a doctrine directly the reverse. It is a most glaring and misleading abuse of language to apply the terms Revelation or Inspiration to such things at all. In saying this it is not denied that the receivers and deliverers of Revelation were generally, though not always—witness Balaam and Caiaphas—in sympathy with God and the truth they delivered ; nor that the receivers of Revelation and the writers of Scripture were in most cases placed in circumstances naturally fitted to impress them, or even to impel them to write their impressions of Divine manifestations. On the contrary, we admit and maintain that God, who usually works through instruments naturally fitted for His purpose, generally used such men so situated to be the communicators of His truth and will. But what we contend for is that it was not their being in possession of these spiritual sympathies and perceptions, nor their being placed in these special providential circumstances, nor their being through these naturally impelled to express their impressions in writing, that constituted them the inspired revealers of the Divine mind ; but simply and solely that, being chosen by God for that purpose, they were supernaturally filled with the Spirit, received a direct supernatural revelation of the Divine truth and message, were divinely directed to express that revelation for general instruction, and were divinely guided in the conception, selection, arrangement, and expression thereof, as it is in Scripture. We maintain this because, as shown, it is the only theory that accords with the statements and phenomena of Scripture, or with the facts of the case. The holders of the above views not only abuse language, but eliminate entirely the supernatural from the writings of the Bible, and make every man's own reason the sole judge of its truth and authority.

Second. The mythical theory of Strauss and his followers, which asserts that the Bible is chiefly a collection of ancient myths. This theory, which has expired, and is disowned and ridiculed in the land and university of its birth, is noticed simply to show that, like most of the rationalistic theories, it sets aside the authority and authenticity of Scripture altogether, and both in

its principles and results proceeds upon the assumption that reason alone is the standard of truth and the rule of life.

Third. The theory of the apostles of "sweetness and light," as represented by Matthew Arnold, who hold that the Bible is largely made up of myths, and who speak even of that greatest and best established fact in human history—the resurrection of Christ—as the fable forming on the Gospel page. Yet they believe that there is a substratum of latent truth under the whole,—particularly under the teaching of Christ as distinguished from the teaching of His apostles,—some elements and principles of important, original, and salutary truth, which they designate the "secret of Jesus."¹ This secret, however, they aver is exceedingly difficult to discover, has been long overlooked or misunderstood, and has by the Church and theologians generally been either entirely misapprehended or perverted, and can be discerned only by those who are largely destitute of the logical, theological, and philosophical faculties, with (as they say) their usual perverting and cumbrous appendages of prejudice, acquirements (grammar, lexicon, exegesis, system), and dogma; but who by nature have keen intuitive perceptions, and by such an acquaintance with all the literature and religions of the world as few ever had, have acquired such a literary taste, tact, and perception, that they can intuitively apprehend and appreciate, as none others can, this "secret," separating it from the abounding error with which even in the Gospels it is overladen; and presuming to sit in judgment on Christ's discourses with this view, they have pretended to be able by their wondrous intuition to ascertain what verses and parts of verses in them were His, and what were the erroneous, and often superstitious additions of His apostles. In some cases they insinuate that even Jesus Himself had not wholly escaped the perverting influence of the prejudice, tradition, and philosophy of His times; and that the one and almost only true thing in the Bible or elsewhere is, that "there is a power outside of us, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness,"—marvellous discovery surely! It is needless to expose here in all its absurdity this strange and amusing compound of ignorance and arrogance, of pretension and presumption, which, little to the credit of the intelligence of the age, became so popular among a class of unthinking, half-educated readers of light literature.

¹ See *Literature and Dogma*.

Suffice it to say that while it contains in its dictum in germ simply one of the oldest elementary truths of natural theology, yet it does so in a defective and even erroneous form ; inasmuch as, in opposition to the testimony of man's consciousness and God's Word, it denies, yea ridicules, the idea that this "power" is moral and intelligent,—a Personal God,—the moral and intelligent Creator and Governor of His moral and intelligent creation. In so far as this theory has any bearing on the question before us—Reason or Revelation—it not only assumes the supremacy of reason, placing it as censor over Revelation, to sift the truth from the error assumed to be in it : but in acting on this groundless assumption it finds only some latent germs of truth amid abounding error, and in the most arbitrary manner proceeds to separate them. It leads, however, to results equalled in absurdity only by the presumption.

Fourth. The theory of the Quakers and others like Dr. Arnold of Rugby, Archdeacon Hare, and Maurice, who maintain that the writers of Scripture possessed only in a pre-eminent degree that gracious spiritual illumination common to all believers. Maurice expressly states this, without as usual any attempt at proof, purely because of what he thinks the reason of men will require. This theory takes out of Inspiration its essential and distinctive thing, making it only synonymous with illumination ; and while admitting that the Bible writers had this in a pre-eminent measure it denies to them any *thing different in kind* from ordinary spiritual men,—thus depriving us of our Divine Book, and leaving us exposed to all the aberrations which even spiritual men have fallen into, without having any sure authoritative standard by which to correct these. Here again, as in all the other theories, reason, under the name of spiritual illumination, is made the supreme test of truth, and the rule of faith and life. For all practical purposes, Revelation is superseded by man's own reason under grace.

Fifth. The view of those who, like Coleridge, limit inspiration to certain parts of Scripture ; some to the law and the prophets exclusive of the rest of Scripture ; some to the N.T. to the exclusion of the Old ; some to Christ's teaching as distinguished from His apostles'. These distinctions and limitations are not only unwarrantable and unscriptural, but arbitrary and unreasonable ; and are founded upon the essentially rationalistic

principle that reason has the right and power to make such distinctions, not only without Scripture warrant, but in direct opposition to express Scripture statement. Thus again reason is placed above Revelation, and Scripture held to be true only because, and in so far as, it accords with reason, and finds response in man's own mind, or "finds" us as Coleridge puts it. It is thus deprived of intrinsic and independent, because Divine, authority; and is recognised to be true only as far as, and simply because it awakens response in the human heart.

Sixth. The latest, and, as coming from a professed believer in supernatural Revelation, perhaps the least satisfactory, is that given in Dr. G. A. Smith's *Isaiah*, as his theory of the inspiration of Isaiah, and of all O.T. prophecy, as noted (p. 335):—

"Isaiah prophesied and predicted all he did from loyalty to two simple truths, which he tells us he received from God Himself: that sin must be punished, and that the people of God must be saved. This simple faith, acting along with a wonderful knowledge of human nature and ceaseless vigilance of affairs, *constituted inspiration for Isaiah*" (Italics ours) (p. 373). "By a faith differing in degree, *but not IN KIND from ours*, these men became prophets of God" (p. 372). Consistently he illustrates the thoroughly naturalistic character of the whole theory by comparing prophetic inspiration to what "men of Science have," by "their knowledge of the laws and principles of nature," or the General has by "taking for granted" that the sun will rise" (p. 214); and what Mazzini, the Italian patriot—whom with Isaiah he classes among "prophets"—had when describing his career—being "*the same divine movement on different natures*" (p. 856). This is a most distinct denial that the inspiration of the prophets differed *in kind* from ours, and implies that it was not properly supernatural. For surely no sound thinker can imagine that the difference between the natural and the supernatural is *merely a difference of degree*, or that any increase of the natural, however much, can ever become the supernatural, or bridge the great gulf between them. It is preposterous to call that Revelation or supernatural inspiration which is only ordinary, what every Christian has by the illumination of the Spirit, what every religious man has in his religious nature, what every human being has in essence in his moral constitution, what is a commonplace of natural theology, what even a sceptic, like Matthew Arnold, expresses in substance in his maxim, "a Power outside, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness,"—which is the simple equivalent, in practically identical terms, by a sceptic who denied a personal God. So that theory would nullify Divine Inspiration, evaporate supernatural Revelation, and exclude Divine prediction supernaturally and directly given by God. As Dr. Norman Walker well said, "He explains everything in such a naturalistic way that it is difficult to see where there is any place left for supernatural inspiration."

CHAPTER II.

THE PARTIALLY AND IMPLICITLY RATIONALISTIC THEORIES.

I. THE ESSENTIAL SUBSTANCE OF SCRIPTURE IS GENERALLY TRUE AND AUTHORITATIVE.

THE view of those who maintain that, although the main substance of what the Bible writers wrote was true, they erred in many things—indefinite erroneousness. They are supposed to have misunderstood, and, therefore, to have misquoted from the earlier Scriptures, and to have supported their own teaching by misapplying them. They erred, too, in their reasonings upon these, and have drawn many false conclusions therefrom,—consequently their whole writings abound with mistakes, misapplications, and wrong teaching; and in cases in which the teaching itself may be in essence right or contain some elements of truth, many of the things connected with it are untrue, and the reasonings by which it is supported are fallacious.

It is scarcely necessary to show that here again reason is made supreme; for not only is Revelation brought to the bar of reason; but it is by reason declared to be convicted of errors many and great; and whatever truth it contains is received as truth simply because Reason, in the unquestioning exercise of its own assumed power and authority, judges it to be true.

2. DEGREES OF INSPIRATION UNSCRIPTURAL.

Others teach different kinds and degrees of Inspiration—some parts of Scripture being supposed to need and possess higher degrees of Inspiration than others. Hence such varieties and degrees as inspiration of suggestion, direction, elevation, and superintendence have been specified and applied to the various

parts of Scripture according to what the inventors thought the writers would require for their respective work. All such distinctions are pure assumptions, without any foundation in Scripture, and contradicted by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching ; which represents the whole Bible as equally the Word of God, which expressly says *all* Scripture is God-breathed and is therefore profitable—making no distinction of books or parts—, and excluding, by the very generality and unqualifiedness of the statement, every theory of different kinds or degrees of Inspiration. This theory arose from a confusion of Inspiration with Revelation, and from overlooking the fact that Inspiration as set forth in Scripture expresses, not specifically the mode of the Spirit's operation on the minds of the writers, but the result of that operation in the character of the writings, rendering them true, authoritative, and Divine in all parts and elements ; and thus making the whole Bible equally God's Word, because all equally God-breathed. The principle of this theory is rationalistic both in its conception and application. It proceeds on the assumption that the true theory of Inspiration is to be formed not from Scripture itself, but from reason excogitating *à priori*, and thus determining what was necessary, probable, and true. In applying this principle to God's Word they make distinctions as to various kinds and degrees of Inspiration in the various parts of it that are not only not warranted by anything therein, but contradicted by its whole tenor and express statements, and they adhere to their own distinctions, in face of Scripture ; and maintain that theirs is the only theory that can secure for it the approbation of the reason of man,—thus making man's reason the test of Divine Revelation.

3. THE BIBLE TRUE AND AUTHORITATIVE ONLY IN MORAL AND RELIGIOUS TEACHING, AND ONLY PARTIALLY IN THESE.

There is the theory of those who hold that the sacred writers were generally reliable in the substance of their moral and religious teaching, but that vague generality is all. They aver that the Bible writers were as liable to err as others, and actually did err in many things ;—errors in matters of science and philosophy, history and geography, nature and life, in facts and dates,

references and reasonings, as well as in some of its moral and religious teaching, self-contradictions, etc. Some holding this general theory allege that while the religious and ethical teaching was in substance generally true and trustworthy, yet since it bears the impress, and takes the colour of the opinion and beliefs of the times, and of the people among whom it was written, therefore, so far as these were erroneous, the Bible is erroneous also. And many now charge it with errors many and grave in religion and morals. In support of this theory,—for it is really one under various modifications,—it is pleaded that the Bible was given only to reveal the will of God for our salvation; and is, therefore, true and trustworthy only so far as was necessary to secure this.

For this theory it is not attempted to produce express Scripture warrant, while, on the other hand, it directly contradicts plain Scripture statements; and the only Scripture support it professes to have is from the alleged discrepancies therein,—discrepancies which have largely disappeared in the progress of Biblical study and historical research, and would probably all disappear if we knew all,—which in no case amount to a demonstrable contradiction or error, and which probably in every case arise from our ignorance; therefore, it is a theory founded not upon knowledge but upon ignorance,—a strange and insufficient basis surely for such a self-confident theory. But the real foundation or source of it is, as in all the others, not Scripture but reason; for it is based upon men's own conceptions of what the Scriptures *should be*, rather than on what they declare they *are*.

THE FALSE ASSUMPTIONS ON WHICH THIS THEORY IS BASED.

First. It is founded also upon the assumption that the *only* purpose for which God gave His Word was to reveal His will for our salvation. Now while this was doubtless its chief design, this was *not the only* purpose served by it. The Bible contains the oldest and the only authentic record of the early history of the world; and as such, is invaluable to the historian. It presents us with the only account we have of the creation of the earth, the production of the order of nature, and the preparation of the world for man. It gives us the best and oldest digest of the rise and development of nations, and of the peopling of the

globe ; so that no ethnologist can afford to despise the ethnographical and genealogical table in Gen. x., but usually makes it his prime source. From incidental hints and references in it, valuable discoveries have been made and confirmed ; and from the agreement of its statements with discoveries made in various sciences, high authorities in these have sought and found corroboration. The earlier portion of Revelation supplies philologists with almost the whole literature they have of one of the oldest and most valuable languages of mankind,—the language around which has moved the main moral and religious history of the race. The Bible shows more varieties of thought, style, and literary form than any single book that has ever been written ; and is thus valuable for all the high ends of literature. Therefore, the Bible, besides revealing the way of life, is of much value to the students of history, ethnology, philology, literature, and of nature and science. And when we think of how much good these have brought to mankind, can we reasonably assume it to be altogether unlikely,—so much a moral certainty that we can take the opposite for granted, and base a whole superstructure of serious inferences upon it—, that the God of our salvation, who takes such a deep interest in all that concerns us, and in countless ways manifests His love, and care—even in the minutest things—would not, in revealing His salvation, pay any regard to these other subordinate but important ends, not even to the extent of preventing serious errors and contradictions, which would mislead in these good ends and mar the chief end ?—especially when it was as easy for God to give His Word as free of false teaching in everything as in anything. And in direct proportion to the probability of this is the improbability of the rationalistic assumption. It thus appears that the foundation of this theory is at once rationalistic and irrational ;—rationalistic, because a pure creation of reason, made not only without Scripture warrant, but on the principle tacitly and unhesitatingly assumed, that such warrant is superfluous :—irrational, because of the inherent improbability of its prime postulate.

The *second* rationalistic and untenable assumption is that since the Bible was written only to reveal salvation, therefore it is true and authoritative only in this. Granting now, for the sake of argument, what has been shown to be an improbable assumption, that Scripture was written exclusively to reveal

salvation, does their inference—that Scripture is erroneous in all else—necessarily or naturally follow? Certainly not. Even admitting the assertion, we combat the inference. For suppose that God in giving His Word had supreme regard for and care of the chief end, does it follow that He would produce it with all the errors and contradictions otherwise common to errant and erring man? Is this like God? Is this the manner in which God acts in any field of His operations, in any part of His works? Is this the way He works in nature? The wide realm of nature is one vast whole whose great chief end is to manifest its Creator's glory. But within this chief end there are many subordinate ends in nature which the God of nature does not consider it beneath Him to think of, and carefully provide for; thereby showing that in the book of nature He acts more God-like than the upholders of this theory would give Him credit for doing in the Book of Revelation. Further, throughout every region and kingdom of nature, and in every being and thing in the universe,—from the greatest to the minutest—from the giant mountain to the grain of sand—from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall—from the mightiest archangel that basks in the light of the eternal throne to the tiniest insect that dances in the sunbeam,—He finds scope for the exercise of His attributes, and acts in a way worthy of His character as God of all. Nay more, in all these He shows that He is careful of all the means He uses as well as in all the ends He contemplates; and throughout every sphere and in every object of nature, whether ends or means, proves that His work like Himself is perfect. And could we scan the realm of Providence as closely, we should, as we may legitimately infer from those parts of it that have come under our observation, find in that mysterious sphere His ways and works are marked everywhere and always by the same characteristics. Thus both Nature and Providence prove what Scripture declares, that the work of the Rock is perfect. And are we to suppose that since it is so in the lower books of Nature and Providence, it will not be so in the highest Book of Revelation? Can we believe that though God is scrupulously careful both of subordinate ends and of all the means towards ends, principal or subordinate, in all other spheres of His working, He will be regardless of these in the divinest region, which He designs more than all others to reveal His glory?

Nature and Providence answer No. And with them corresponds the voice of Scripture itself, which declares that the word of the Lord is pure and perfect, true and right, sure and enduring for ever, like silver seven times purified. Yea, even the voice of respectable literature itself agrees ; for it expects and requires in all work that will receive its favour, that the authors shall seek to avoid errors and contradictions in the form and the execution of the work ; and would unsparingly condemn any author who would by carelessness, or of design, permit such freely to mar his work,—even though they should not teach error on the main subject of the book. Why, any author worthy of the name would blush to confess that he had purposely permitted blunders to appear in anything that came from his pen. And on the upholders of this pretentious theory lies, by this assumption, the burden of gainsaying the testimony of Nature, Providence, and Scripture, which with one voice proclaim that the work of the Rock in all parts of his operation is perfect, and of gratuitously charging the unerring God with doing or permitting in the production of His eternal Word what would discredit any literary man in issuing an ephemeral production on the trifles of a day. This is simply *à priori* reasoning in answer to an *à priori* rationalistic assumption and argument. The question of fact is proved otherwise above and below ; and is specially corroborated by the unquestionably and admittedly greater correctness of the Bible in its statements on many things, *e.g.* its cosmogony, compared with all other ancient literature ; which proves that God did exercise control over the Bible writers. Thus the untenableness of the second assumption lying at the root of this theory is evident. But whatever opinion may be held as to its untenableness, there cannot be any doubt as to its nature ; for it is purely the product of human reason, not only without Scripture authority, but contrary to what seems to be plain and pervading Scripture teaching.

But this appears more manifestly still in the *third* assumption of this theory. It proceeds upon the supposition that the revelation of God's will for man's salvation would be as satisfactorily made were Scripture true and reliable simply in salvation, and erroneous as the writings of uninspired men in all else. Now we do not deny that if the Bible had been written thus it might have been possible for men to find the way of life. Nay

more, though it had been written wholly by credible but un-inspired and, therefore, fallible men, even then the great outstanding facts of our religion might have been made known to us very much as we have them, and a real, Divine, historical Christ, not differing essentially from the Christ we know, might stand out before earnest men as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." But though even on this lowest supposition earnest souls might through the Spirit's guidance find their way to eternal life in Christ, yet who does not easily perceive the immense difference that would instantly be felt between salvation revealed in a volume so composed, and salvation revealed as it has been in the inspired Word ; and how immensely the Bible would fall in the estimation of all, from the position it has hitherto occupied, because it would cease to be regarded as the Word of God, but merely as the word of man ?¹ We might have all the main facts of Scripture, but without any certainty that these facts had not been altered or modified or misunderstood through the mistaken judgment of errant men. We might have many statements of doctrine given as to the teaching of Christ or His apostles, but without proper security that the teaching was not misapprehended, or misrepresented, or insufficiently expressed,—while it would be sure to be partially mixed with error and superstition. In short, we might, perhaps, have had from the pen of men entirely uninspired Scriptures not differing in substance from our own. And yet, from the simple fact that they were not inspired, the truth would not only be mixed with all the errors and superstitions common to all merely human writings ; but, further—and this is the essential thing—they would be entirely destitute of Divine authority. And they would be rightly destitute thereof ; because, being uninspired, though writings on Divine things, they were not Divine writings. Consequently they would carry no Divine authority, nor command that reverence or fear of the Lord with which men spontaneously receive the Word of God ; and receive it to their eternal salvation just because they receive it as the Word of the Lord. They would give a real cause of stumbling to the many

¹ The above is given mainly, not as positive proof, but as refutation of the *à priori* assertions and assumptions of Rationalism, by showing their improbability and irrationality. A strong presumption from reason in support of Scripture teaching.

who, even with the Bible as we have it, too readily stumble at the Word. While earnest souls, sincerely seeking after the truth, and desiring with all the pathetic earnestness of men all alive to their eternal interests, a sure foundation for their everlasting hopes, and an infallible guide in their perplexed way, would in many cases abandon the pursuit in the hopelessness of despair, or, being paralysed by uncertainty, settle down in the darkness of scepticism.

Unbelieving critics ever eager to seize every means of minimising the supernatural in Scripture, and always ambitious to display their perverse ingenuity in discrediting its authority, would feel that they had loose rein to ride rough shod over all the truths and foundations of our faith, and could easily lay the last bulwark of Revelation prostrate with the ground. And well might a benighted humanity, crying for the light that only Scripture clearly gives, sighing for the sure hope that God's Word alone imparts, and, like the dove of old, gazing wistfully abroad across the watery waste of human literature and opinion, unstable, uncertain, ever-changing as the restless sea, and finding there no place for the sole of its foot—raise a wailing deeper than Cassandra's for the credulity that would save it from despair.

THE RATIONALISTIC ATTITUDE ASSUMED, AND THE RESULTS.

But the essential rationalism of this whole theory appears most manifestly in the rationalistic attitude its acceptors must assume, the rationalistic principle on which they must proceed, and the rationalistic results they must logically produce in dealing with the Word of God. He that takes up the Bible as the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever, and reads it, believing it to embody in all its parts and statements God's truth, is thereby placed in the position of an earnest, reverent student thereof, and only requires to ascertain its meaning to believe its teaching. But he that enters on its study, believing it, while containing precious truth, to contain an indefinite amount of error and untruth, is, at the very outset, made a critic and a judge of its contents. He, by that very fact, ceases to be a simple, believing recipient, and becomes a wary, if not a semi-sceptical critic, having at every step, and in every part, to

eliminate the error from the truth in God's Word. The deeper his sense of the importance of the interests involved in finding the truth in the Bible, the greater will be his sense of obligation to assume this attitude, and to scrutinise it all. Thus by the very position this theory requires the upholders of it to assume, reason is placed above Revelation by being constituted, not only the interpreter of its meaning, but the critic of its contents and the judge of its truth.

Still more does the thorough rationalism appear when we consider the application of this principle, and the method on which it proceeds. Coming to the study of the Bible with the belief that untruths are in it such as occur in ordinary writings, we must proceed to eliminate them by the best means available. These are either our own judgment or the judgment of others. But in *both* cases mere human judgment,—always liable to err, ever certain to vary, and never sure of the result. Thus mere human Reason is not only placed above Revelation, but is held to be entitled, yea, required to traverse it all, to separate the wheat from the chaff, to settle what is true and what false in God's Word; only to find that the sole authority men have for receiving this purged Bible as true is merely man's erring Reason! Now, apart altogether from the utter unsatisfactoriness of such a result,—giving us a Bible that would vary with every varying man; and apart from the unreliability of such a ground for faith in the truth of Scripture, the bald rationalism of such a method, and of the principle on which it is founded and proceeds, is self-evident, and cannot be distinguished *in kind* from most avowed Rationalism.

Nor is this all, for in proceeding on this principle through Scripture, its advocates are confronted, in every part and at almost every step, with statements and expressions that seem manifestly to teach that the whole Bible, without distinction of parts, is the Word of God, of Divine origin, truth, and authority. This theory is, therefore, essentially rationalistic, not only in the attitude it assumes, and glaringly so in the principle on which it proceeds, and the spirit by which it is pervaded; but also in the fact that it is not only destitute of Scripture proof for its own view, but is directly opposed to explicit and emphatic Scripture teaching. Yet such is the strength of this rationalistic spirit that they take no cognizance of this, as if the primary claim of

God's Word were of no moment on this the fundamental question of its own authority!—the question that is the basis of all its teaching, and on which its whole value as a guide to man depends.

No wonder that all those who so treat God's Word should arrive at results sufficiently rationalistic and anti-scriptural. Doubtless those results will be sufficiently diverse,—even as those professing to hold this general theory differ greatly from each other in the sense in which, and the grounds on which they hold it. But there is essentially the same rationalistic principle in all, and the main result arrived at is identically the same in all—even the supremacy of Reason over Revelation. For however much they may vary in spirit, faith, and design, their variations are limited to the applications of their common principle, which do not affect the principle itself. And even in these things in which some of them might admit the truth and authority in some Scripture things, they do so, not because they are contained in God's Word, nor from an examination of its teaching, but because they have judged them to be matters of doctrine or duty, in which some would in a vague way hold the Bible authoritative:—thus making reason doubly supreme; first, in settling simply by it, in what *kinds* of things God's Word may be authoritative; and, second, what items should be included therein.

In short, they, first, assert positively that the Bible is infallible only in matters of faith and duty. Second, they generally declare that it has erred more or less in these, and usually urge them most to show its erroneousness. Third, they do not and cannot specify with certainty in which of the things even of that kind the Bible is infallible and Divinely authoritative. And for none of these positions can they produce Bible proof; by all of them they contradict manifold Bible teaching; and by every one of them they exhibit the common rationalistic principle; for even what they receive is not on Scripture grounds, but on the general reasonings of the false root-principle. A Bible held to be vaguely true in matters of faith and life, but without specification of what these are, or any sure rule to ascertain them, could never be an authoritative standard at all; but men would be driven out of Scripture altogether, on to the quicksands of mere human opinion along with avowed rationalists.

A THEORY MADE OUT OF DIFFICULTIES AND DISCREPANCIES.

Some, conscious of the impossibility of finding positive Scripture proof for their theory, and being desirous to conciliate, if not to convince, those holding the supremacy of Bible teaching, have sought to find something in God's Word to accord with and to corroborate their view; and have appealed, with confidence, from its explicit teaching and general tenor to what they designate its phenomena.

Now, while no scientific theologian would overlook or depreciate these, it is a canon of all sound Scripture interpretation that its explicit statements, especially when supported by its general tenor, are the proper and supreme data for the decision of any doctrinal question. When any discrepancy appears between these and the phenomena, the first must decide the question; for this obvious, among other reasons, that we are much more liable to err in drawing inferences from the general phenomena, than in interpreting its explicit statements, or apprehending its general tenor.

Further, when we come to inquire what the phenomena are from which this theory seeks Bible support, we find it is not the whole phenomena, but only a very limited and the least important portion of them: even the old, threadbare phenomena of Scripture difficulties; difficulties of harmony arising from seeming discrepancies in the Bible itself, and difficulties of reconciliation with teaching from other sources of knowledge. How strange to see Christian men, in upholding untenable theories, resorting for arguments where the most bitter and unscrupulous foes of the faith have sought to find materials to vent their enmity in virulent attacks upon the Word of God! How humiliating to see professedly Christian apologists, in their mistaken zeal for unscriptural theories, and misconceiving where the strength of the Christian apology lies, taking common ground in this with avowed Rationalists and Sceptics! and eagerly seizing the same weapons against the truth as have been ten thousand times used, but only to their refutation, by such foes as Celsus and Porphyry, Voltaire and Paine, Holyoake and Bradlaugh, Ingersoll and Foote! How amazing to find Christian writers so losing themselves as to imagine that when they have refurbished some of the old, oft-refuted arguments from difficulties and discrepancies,

they have overthrown all the solid mass of positive evidence for the truth and authority of the Bible, which has stood the test of ages, and commanded the faith of every section of the Christian Church till now ! And how absurd to dream that they have established their own unfounded theories by urging the difficulties of others, as if the raising of difficulties and the urging of objections against the Bible doctrine were equivalent to the disproof of it, and the proof of the opposite theory ! Why, the producing of serious difficulties, or even the establishing of seemingly valid objections, is surely no disproof, else every truth might be disproved.

How strangely illogical, then, is this when the difficulties are not serious, and the objections weak ! If this is a fair specimen of the new logic of the new apologetic, I prefer the old, for the old is better. Difficulties ! Discrepancies ! Objections ! Why, if these are to be held as sufficient to disprove doctrines, established by explicit, positive evidence, then there is not a single doctrine of Scripture that would not be overthrown ; for there is not one of them against which some plausible objection might not be raised ; all of them are attended with some difficulty, and some essential to hold with serious difficulties—serious, not merely as arguments in the dexterous hands of subtle foes, but serious in the inward heart-thoughts and life-struggles of earnest friends.

But if the question is to be settled by difficulties, then the truth and Divine authority of the Bible in faith and life must go with its indefinite erroneousness in other things. For far more serious difficulties and objections can be brought against its teaching on religion and morals than against its harmony with itself, or with established truths in other spheres of knowledge.

On this principle, indeed, it would be impossible to establish any truth in any sphere of knowledge, or to follow any course of action in any path of life. For there is not a single truth in science—not even the law of gravitation—nor one act in life against which some objection could not be brought ; so that, if logically carried out to its ultimate issues, this principle would land the Errorists in absolute scepticism, and drive them out of the universe.

Meantime it is sufficient and significant to observe that those adopting it take the same ground, and use the same means to

discredit God's Word, and to justify their adhesion to this irrational Rationalism, as the most avowed foes of our faith.

When infidelity had rashly imagined that it had convicted the Bible of error and false teaching, it was content with inferring that Christianity was untrue, and, therefore, to be rejected. It was left for the logic of the new apologetic to infer that the Bible was the more likely to be infallible in some things, because it had been convicted of error in others!

A theory made out of and founded upon the alleged difficulties of other theories, if not something new under the sun, is—especially when asserted with such confidence, as if the true theory were thereby proved false and the false true—certainly somewhat amusing and amazing, as coming from those making great pretensions to superior knowledge and logical acumen.

THE BIBLE CLAIMS TRUTH AND TRUSTWORTHINESS FOR
ALL EQUALLY.

It is vain to attempt to limit the Bible claim to particular parts or things in it. For whatever it claims in truth and authority it claims for all, and for all equally; and all seems purposely so stated as to preclude any other view. The many explicit passages teach, if language can teach anything, that the Bible, "*all Scripture*" is the Word of God, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. This and this only the Church, under the teaching of the Spirit, has ever understood them to teach. Nor can they teach anything else, as shown above; for this is the plain and only legitimate meaning of the most direct and decisive passages (as even opponents have felt and been constrained to admit), when taken by themselves, and apart from the illegitimate considerations by which these have sought to narrow their meaning and to limit their scope. But they are so explicit and absolute that they cannot by honest exegesis be limited to anything less than "*all Scripture*"; and the chief phenomena strongly confirm them, as seen; nor has the most perverse ingenuity been able to show anything else, far less to favour or leave room for the direct opposite. I say the *direct* opposite—the logical contradictory. For when the propositions are "all Scripture is true and trustworthy," and "Scripture is untrue and untrustworthy in an indefinite number of things," then the opposition is direct,

the propositions are contradictory ; and, therefore, according to the inexorable logic of the square of opposition, if the one is true, the other must be false.

In fact, while we produce many explicit, unquestionable passages, and vast masses of the main phenomena and many other confirmatory passages, with much other corroborative proof, they have not produced one direct, explicit, and indisputable passage, distinctly or professedly dealing with the question, to establish their theory ; and though challenged, they cannot. Indeed, it would be a direct self-contradiction by the Word of God of its root-doctrine and the fundamental postulate of all its doctrines, which would prove it to be not the Word of God at all.

The testimony of all the direct, and explicit passages is in favour of our doctrine or of none, certainly not of the doctrine that is the direct opposite (contradictory) of them, for it is their logical contradictory.

The truth is, the reasons that led to the adoption of this theory were not originally derived from Scripture at all. They do not even profess to found it on direct, explicit passages. They were first used by the foes of the Christian faith—by the Rationalists and infidels—who, in their hostility to Christianity, seized eagerly upon the difficulties and discrepancies of Scripture ; and by striving to show from these that it abounded in errors and contradictions, sought thus to throw discredit on the whole ; and concluded that as they had discredited the record of our religion, they had proved its falsity, and destroyed itself. Our new apologists, not seeing their way to meet these objections, and thinking, by mistake, that if they maintained the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture, they were logically bound to solve all these difficulties ; and fancying that they could, without loss and with much advantage, yield this ground to the enemy, and, while admitting these alleged errors and contradictions, maintain its real and Divine authority, of the Bible revelation,—yea, they even thought to place the defence of Christianity in a stronger position—therefore they abandoned the true Bible claim, and surrendered to the foe the position that had for centuries been held so well. Then uniting with the enemy in this, they attacked those who still maintained the true well-tried position—the Bible claim—and eagerly seized

with the foes upon the difficulties of Scripture to support the attack. This, indeed, is the simple history and real origin of these theories. And whatever else it shows, it confirms the view that they were not derived from Scripture at all, but from the arguments of its opponents, and are thus the outcome of an unnecessary surrender or compromise with the foe, references to either the statements or the phenomena of Scripture being an afterthought.

And certainly if there is any weight in arguments from difficulties, they bear with equal and even greater force against the Bible teaching on doctrine and duty. For this is its first and best established doctrine, and is the basis of all its other doctrines and claims. So that the adducing of difficulties and objections to the Bible claim does just nothing, or less than nothing, to support its infallibility or authority in matters of religion and morals, but the reverse. If they have any weight at all it is against the Bible infallibility and authority in anything—specially in these things. Whatever evidence or argument can be adduced in favour of the infallibility and Divine authority of Scripture in doctrine and duty supports this, its primary and foundation doctrine,—which is and must be postulated in all its other teaching;—so that the producing or parading of these difficulties and objections does simply nothing either to disprove our doctrine, which is the Bible claim, or to prove their own—the opposite.

Had they only taken and stated their own position, leaving others to do the same, although the rationalism might remain, and the apologetic weakness still exist, yet they might have been let alone to construct whatever apology they could from their standpoint. But when, not content with this, they present their theory in a form so directly antagonistic to the Bible claim, and seek to drive all others from the true and tried into their own new and untenable position; and when, still further, they do so by the use of the same materials as, and by the adoption of principles similar to, unbelievers, they must be met in a similar way, and shown not only the unwarrantableness of their attacks on God's Word, but also the indefensibleness of their own position. Had they simply taken up the position,—as is often in other cases done with sceptics for argument's sake,—then they might have been left to meet the enemy as best they could from their standpoint. But when, instead of this, they, in stating and maintaining

their own theory, impugn the truthfulness of Scripture, and strive, by means like the foe, to make it appear that it has erred in many, and is untrustworthy in an indefinite number of things, they not only assail, and assail from behind, a position that has been long well maintained, but also place weapons in the hand of the foe, by which, if properly used, their own position is rendered indefensible, and the whole defences of the faith are exposed to a general, if not resistless, assault.

THE SERIOUS PRACTICAL ISSUES OF THE PRINCIPLE. THE
SERIOUS QUESTIONS RAISED, BUT NOT ANSWERED.

This appears when this principle is applied practically to Scripture, and carried out to its legitimate issues.

Going to the study of God's Word with the theory that it is infallible only in a vague general way in some matters of faith and life, the student is confronted at once with these practical difficulties and pressing questions—*What* therein is matter of faith or life? How am I to know how much of Scripture is to be included in this category? and how can I make sure what in this class even is infallible, since all in it even is now but indefinitely erroneous? By what standard am I to test what is true and what is false in the Word of God? How can I make these fixed and not variable quantities? How am I to find them with certainty? And by what principle, on what grounds, and with what results are all this to be authoritatively made sure?

When the Bible is the chart of man's salvation, on the knowledge and belief of which our eternity depends, I realise that these are not idle or trifling, much less curious or captious questions, but questions of the highest moment, and of most urgent concern; and the more seriously I am alive to my everlasting interests, the more deeply I feel the necessity and urgency of having these questions satisfactorily answered and surely settled.

And as this theory forces this upon me, the advocates of it are, therefore, bound both logically and morally to answer these questions, and to solve these difficulties; since by their theory they deprive me of a true and Divinely-authoritative Bible, and replace it by an indefinitely erroneous and unauthoritative book. Logically bound, because their whole theory, as shown,

is founded on and composed of difficulties, real or supposed, in connection with the Bible view and claim, and not from positive evidence for their own. And if difficulties connected with a doctrine of Scripture, established by proper, positive Bible proof, confirmed by other strong evidence, be, as implied, fatal to that view, and sufficient reason for its rejection and for the creation and proof of the opposite, then, clearly, on the same principle, difficulties,—specially such difficulties as these necessary questions raise, should be fatal to such a theory, and more than sufficient ground for the rejection of it;—especially as it is destitute of independent, positive evidence. And surely a theory thus made out of the difficulties of others should itself be freed of difficulties, and of difficulties far more serious than any attaching to the other view. Certainly those who make so much of the difficulties of the contrary view are, on their own grounds, logically, manifestly bound to explain and remove the difficulties of their own.

But they are also morally bound to do so. The propounders of any theory, so constructed and affecting practically the lives and beliefs of men, are justly expected and bound to explain their theory, to apply it, to show the method of its application, and to rid it of such serious, practical difficulties. They are under the strongest obligation to do so when, as here, their theory affects the highest interests of mankind, and proposes even to revolutionise men's way of regarding and handling their only sure light for time and eternity. It is always a serious thing to unsettle men's minds on important practical religious matters, and should never be done without the strongest reasons, on sure grounds, and with the greatest possible care to show that the sacred interests are not sacrificed but conserved. It is ruinous to shake men's confidence in, or bewilder men's minds about, the sources of Divine help; and those who do so, or whose theories tend to do so, lay themselves under the most solemn obligation to use all means to prevent such consequences, to make evident even to the humblest understanding how these theories may be held and applied consistently with the safety of their eternal interests and absolute confidence in the Bible.¹

And yet are not these the very evils this theory has done? Are not these the very consequences it naturally and necessarily

¹ See Dr. Westcott, above; Dr. Stalker in *British Weekly*.

tends to produce? By impugning the reliability of the Bible, has it not unsettled men's minds in what concerns their highest interests? Has it not, by disowning the truth, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of Scripture, lessened, so far as believed, men's faith in what they had, with implicit confidence, taken as their guide through life to immortality? And has it not, by asserting the errancy and indefinite erroneousness of God's Word, destroyed or weakened men's faith in the Divine source of light and life? or driven them, by the very indefiniteness as to the matters in which Scripture cannot be relied upon, into painful perplexity as to what it can be relied upon, if not into a hopeless uncertainty as to whether it can be implicitly relied upon in anything? How could it be otherwise? Touch the authority and authenticity of God's Word, and you of necessity touch the foundations of Christian faith, tamper with the title-deeds of man's salvation, injure the springs of religious life, and confuse the sources of Divine help. Teach those who have been wont as a first and unquestionable principle of their thought and action to regard the Bible—the whole Bible—without distinction of parts, as the Word of God, that it is not all true or trustworthy, but partially untrue and untrustworthy, without specifying definitely where it is the one or the other, or showing how men may ascertain this,—and if they believe this, you instantly and irresistibly shake men's confidence in the Bible seriously. Or, if they still cling to it with an eager tenacity as the only source of all their dearest hopes, they set their anxious spirits aworking on the hard, dubious task of groping after the truth if haply they may find it, with only this certain, that, from the nature of the case, unless they are foolish enough to rely implicitly upon their own errant reason, they can never be sure of having found the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, or have full confidence that their faith is, in every or in any case, well founded.

Proclaim that the Bible is errant, that in an indefinite number of things it has actually erred, and that it cannot be relied upon more than other books except in some things,—leaving these things unspecified and indefinite, or without showing how they can be certainly found,—so that it becomes practically impossible to separate them with certainty from the erroneous things with which they are indefinitely intermingled,—and you irresistibly

lead all who accept this, to distrust and suspect the Bible, or to abandon in despair the hopeless task of arriving at certitude where men most need and cry for it,—certitude in anything could only equal their confidence in their own inerrancy, which only paralyses and maddens the earnest soul.

This then is what this theory leads to. It would take away that Word of the Lord on which earnest believing men from the days of Moses until now have, amid the watery waste of human opinion, placed their faith as on an everlasting rock, and looking around from that Divine and everlasting foundation upon the transitoriness and uncertainty of all human thought and things, in calm confidence, and in the sublime language of ancient prophecy, have said, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever": and in the teeth of Him who in Divine majesty declared that heaven and earth should pass away, but one jot or tittle of it should in nowise pass away,—they dare to assert that this eternal Rock is largely sand; and that, therefore, men had better place their feet on it less confidently, lest they should find themselves on sand imagining it was rock;—while, at the same time, as if to make confusion more confounded, they with tantalising vagueness fail to tell them which is rock and which sand; but leave them to find it for themselves, as best they may, with the help of a mere vague generality about faith and life, which only tantalises instead of enlightens, and lets them sink or stand as caprice or chance may fix. And surely those who take this serious responsibility on themselves are at least bound to state precisely what their substitute is, and to show clearly how it can be universally and with full assurance used. But this, which they are both logically and morally bound to do, they have never done; they have never even seriously attempted to do. They have not shown what portions or passages, statements or facts, of God's Word are true and what false, nor by what sure standard they can be separated. They have not specified what parts or things are of Divine authority and what are not, or how this can be surely known; nor have they explained how, in the face of Scripture teaching declaring the truth and Divine authority of all Scriptures, this can be predicated of some while denied to others. They have not shown on grounds of Scripture, or even reason, the

principle on which their distinction is based, nor how it can be applied so as to eliminate incerrantly the erroneous from the true, nor explained how it is consistent with the supremacy of Scripture at all. They have not stated nor justified the grounds upon which they make such distinctions, nor how they can reasonably receive as of Divine authority even what they profess to believe, or ascribe this to anything in God's Word ; nor by what sufficient reasons they can bind these things on the conscience of men, with God's authority, when they reject it in others. And above all, they have failed to show how, on their theory, earnest souls could assuredly use the Bible as the guide of their life through time, or the foundation of their hope for eternity ;—nor how, by it, the Church of God, as the pillar and ground of the truth, could give a clear and unwavering testimony to groping men,—which can never be done except by holding forth the sure word of life like as a steady light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn and the day-star arise in their hearts. Nor have they shown how by it scepticism could be silenced, or convinced, or successfully resisted, or even prevented from overthrowing every bulwark of the faith, on these very principles, and by the use of the very weapons which a new but unwise apologetic has put into its hands.

CHAPTER III.

MODIFICATIONS OF THE THEORIES OF INDEFINITE ERRONEOUSNESS.

I. THE BIBLE INFALLIBLE IN ALL THAT AFFECTS FAITH AND LIFE.

SOME have said that the Bible is infallible in all that affects faith and life. Now, if by this was meant that the whole Bible, as God's Word, was true and authoritative, we should not care to raise objection, however defective we might consider their manner of statement. But since it is designed to deny this, and to limit it to some unspecified things therein, and implies that there is in it an indefinite number of things destitute of this, we have to say :—*First*. That this implied distinction between what does and what does not affect faith and life in God's Word is without Scripture warrant, has never had Scripture proof adduced in its support ; it is, therefore, founded upon a rationalistic assumption involving all the evils and objectionableness exposed above.

NOTHING IN SCRIPTURE THAT DOES NOT AFFECT FAITH AND LIFE.

It is based on the unwarrantable assumption that there are some things in Scripture which do not affect faith or life, or that there are only some which do. Now this is the very thing they require to prove ; and the assuming of it without proof, or even attempt at proof, is simply a *petitio principii*. They have not only not proved this, but proof of such a position is from the nature of the case a practical impossibility. They may guess, imagine, reason, render plausible, but *prove—never*. How can any man

know, or with reason assert, far less prove, that any thing or class of things in Scripture cannot in any way or measure affect faith or life? He may declare that it does not affect *his own*;—but even then others might fairly ask what, and of what value, his system of doctrine and duty was; and relevantly raise the question how much it was unconsciously affected by his theory, if not the natural result of it. But it is simply impossible for him to know that the faith and conduct of others could not be affected, were it only for this, that he cannot know what the faith and life of others are, have been, or may be; and consequently cannot tell how they may be affected by anything in Scripture. How unreasonable then is it to assert, imply, or assume that faith and life can be affected only by some things in Scripture, when it is impossible to prove or know that they may not be affected by anything or everything therein.

But we go further. We have gone beyond what in strict logic was required, for the *onus probandi* lies on those who assumed this as the basis of their theory. But, further, this is not only an unproved and unprovable, it is also a false assumption. It might even be shown that everything found in a book that you took as your standard in religion and morals, and your guide through life to immortality, would naturally affect your faith and action in some though perhaps imperceptible way or measure;—especially when anything untrue or unreliable is supposed to be found in such a book. But it is not necessary to show this in order to prove that this assumption is untrue. For the assumption is that in the Bible there are not one, but many things; and not merely one class, but many classes of things that do not affect faith or life,—that, indeed, there are only some things that do, and that all the rest are either indifferent or errant. Taking up the Bible with this view, I am instantly made to feel that my faith and life are seriously affected thereby. For having been wont to regard the *whole* Bible as my standard and guide in these, and having believed that “all” Scripture was, in order to this, true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, because God-breathed,—not only has my belief in this to me cardinal doctrine—the foundation and indispensable postulate of all the other doctrines—to be abandoned, but my faith in the infallible truth and Divine authority of the Bible as a whole receives a serious shock; and all the truths and views that on this basis I had derived therefrom,

receive a corresponding shock. I am forthwith required to reconsider, modify, and reconstruct if I can, by a new standard and on another basis, my whole moral and religious beliefs. Thus my faith and life are not only affected, but unsettled, and revolutionised by the false assumption at the basis of this theory.

But this is not all by any means. So far as my beliefs and ideas were formed from or influenced by those parts of Scripture that, on this theory, do not form part of doctrine or duty, it is manifest that to that extent they are not only affected but destroyed. My faith in the truth and Divine authority of *all* Scripture is, of necessity, annihilated. I am, therefore, disposed and required, by a mental and moral necessity, to assume the attitude, not of a humble believer, but of a critical judge of what in the Bible is true and authoritative, and what is not.

WHAT IN SCRIPTURE AFFECTS FAITH AND LIFE?

I now ask my new instructors to tell me what are the things in Scripture that *do* affect faith and life,—to specify definitely, not in vague generality—and to set forth in completeness and with unerring certitude, not partially or dubiously,—what in Scripture is infallible and of Divine authority, and what is not. But I find they cannot or do not tell me, nor do they show me how I can surely ascertain this for myself;—and thus my whole faith becomes unsettled. I neither know what I am to believe, nor what I am to take as the infallible ground of my belief, nor how I can certainly determine either the one or the other. Sometimes I may be told the Bible is infallible and authoritative in all that affects faith and life; and when I ask what affects faith and life, I am answered that in which it is infallible; and I thus feel that my intellect is insulted, and my soul trifled with by a vicious logic and an impotent evasiveness. At other times certain leading religious and ethical principles are set forth as unquestionably matters of faith and life. But when I inquire how and on what principle these were separated from the rest, and on what ground I am to receive them as such, and Scripture teaching on them as infallible and authoritative, I get either no answer or an unsatisfactory one,—either the questions are evaded, or I am told that by general consent they are received, because men's consciousness witnesses to their truth.

By this the painful and perplexing fact is forced upon me that even for these no Divine or Scriptural, but only a human foundation is given;—that these are regarded as authoritative, not because they are revealed in the Word of God, but because they accord with the consciousness of man. The Bible is even in these to be held infallible, not because they are revealed in God's Word, but because they are responded to in man's heart and conscience. Thus even for the first principles of religion and morality, a foundation has to be found *outside the Bible*, away from Divine authority, in fallen human nature, and in the fallible, varying, contradictory, and frequently erroneous opinions of men. There cannot, of course, be anything distinctive of Revelation or of Christianity in these general findings, but only some primary ethical and religious principles common to all religious and inherent essential elements in man's moral constitution.

And when I still press further, and ask what portions or statements of Scripture teach these cardinal truths, and whether these few are all in which the Bible is infallible (I cannot say authoritative also, for, as we have seen, Divine authority they on these principles cannot have); and how I can reasonably and authoritatively even in these require the faith and obedience of those who deny and reject some or all of them:—for a universal, uniform creed, which this whole system tacitly assumes, has never yet been found, not even when limited to one truth,—I am again refused an explicit reply, or told frankly that they cannot tell, or that it is very difficult to know or to state the truth on the question, or to give any definite information, or reliable rule, or sure guidance at all,—or that the whole question is involved in much uncertainty, and in a transition state; so that each person must find out these things for himself as best he may. Thus, like a mariner driven to sea, to find, without chart or compass, a haven of rest, I am cast adrift to find my faith and guide my life as best I can amid the mists of human opinion, and launched upon a shoreless sea of chaotic speculation, or left stranded upon the dark and fatal rocks of Rationalism or unbelief.

MUST BECOME CRITIC AND JUDGE OF THE BIBLE.

Proceeding then on this view to investigate Scripture, I am strongly impressed with the momentous consequences of the fact

that my faith in its independent truth and authority has been annihilated : and that I have nothing now to guide me as to what affects faith and life, or is infallible in the Bible, but the perceived accordance between its statements and my own consciousness. I feel that I am, by a mental and moral necessity, forced to take up the precarious, responsible, and presumptuous position of a judge of what is false and what is true in God's Word. I am compelled to abandon the attitude of a humble believer that trembles at the Word of the Lord, and to assume the attitude of a critic of its truth and authority. Being so placed, I feel, at the outset, that anything like full confidence in my conclusions is virtually destroyed. As I proceed, however, I am met and confronted everywhere with statements, expressions, and a tone of Divine authority, and an air of certainty that pervade the book, and convince me that if the Bible teaches anything it teaches its own truth and Divine authority, and claims this for itself as the foundation of all its other teaching—as the ground upon which it bases, and claims reception of, all it states. I am, therefore, shut up to the conclusion that if the uniform and emphatic teaching, and the authoritative claim of Scripture on this cardinal doctrine, are not to be accepted, it is vain or worse to inquire what is its teaching on other subjects ; for on no other truth does its teaching seem to be so full, emphatic, and uniform ; and for no other doctrine is its testimony more decisive or final. Particularly, I find it looks as if it had been purposely made to give a full and direct contradiction to the view that there are some things in Scripture that do not affect faith and life, and only some that do ;—especially as it expressly, when professedly treating of the subject, declares that “*All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, . . . and for instruction in righteousness.*”

After rejecting such testimony, it seems folly to inquire further what is its teaching on anything.

CONTRADICTORY CONCLUSIONS AS TO WHAT AFFECTS FAITH AND LIFE.

But to complete the contradictions and to crown the confusion, I find when I have finished my examination that the results do not agree with the findings of others,—that the creed

which by the test of consciousness I have deduced from the Bible differs from the creed of others,—that the critics greatly differ from each other,—that no two students agree in everything, that some deny almost all that others affirm ; and it is possible, that all may in various ways be wrong. And as no one, or class, can authoritatively state which is right, should any be,—for no man's consciousness is authoritative over others,—it follows by a simple but resistless necessity that all must ultimately land in agnosticism, or each erring, varying man must become a Bible and a standard to himself ;—a result which, whatever else it does, at least not only affects, but annihilates the teaching of the Bible as a rule of faith and life, and all our faith founded thereon.

As far as argument against this form of the theory is concerned we might here end ; for the proof is closed, and conclusive to every logical mind ; and it is largely because men have not thoroughly pondered the effects of their view, and have not carried out their theories to their legitimate, ultimate consequences, that some have advocated, and others adopted this theory.

It now remains simply to apply the principles and results already set forth in proving the essential rationalism and untenableness of this theory in general, to some special phases, and expressions of it that have been adopted with a view seemingly to evade the objections brought against it in its usual form.

2. THE BIBLE INFALLIBLE AND AUTHORITATIVE IN ALL ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

Some, to place Christianity, as they imagine, in a stronger position, and to secure for their theory the support of those that refuse to accept the Bible as an infallible standard in all matters of faith and life, assert that it is infallible in all that is essential to salvation, but only in this. Much of what has been advanced above is conclusive against this also ; and, indeed, applies to it with greater force. For it immediately raises, without settling, such questions as, What is salvation ? What is essential to salvation ? By what means, and on what grounds, are we to determine these questions with certainty ? The very parties whom this theory was designed to conciliate differ *toto cælo* from many

who adopt this theory as to what salvation is, and as to what is essential thereunto ; even as they differ greatly among themselves. It not only raises without settling such questions, but it does so after having deprived us of the only reliable means towards a settlement thereof—a true and authoritative Bible ; and leaves us in all the confusion and self-contradiction of Rationalism.

Besides, who can tell what is essential to salvation? Scripture has nowhere set forth how much of Divine truth must be believed in order to salvation ; or how little is essential, or might be sufficient to save the soul. Poor Tom, half idiot as he was, knew only that there were “three in one, and one in three, and the Middle One has died for me” ; and yet that belief might and probably did save him. Yet I presume few if any of the supporters of this theory would be prepared to assert that this was all in which Scripture is infallible. And certainly there is much in it that is most firmly believed, and that all parties in this controversy would maintain to be its infallible teaching, which no wise man would assert to be *essential* to salvation. This theory is, therefore, manifestly untenable and unsatisfactory.

3. THE BIBLE TRUE AND AUTHORITATIVE IN ITS TEACHING.

Others say that the Bible is infallible in its *Teaching*. With this we agree, and to this statement of the Bible claim we have, generally, no objection. If by this were meant that the Bible is true and of Divine authority in *all* its teaching, then this is our doctrine. For to those who believe that the *whole* Bible teaches, and that every part and thing in it teaches something, this is equivalent to teaching the truth, value, and Divine authority of all Scripture. Or if by this were meant that there are some things and sayings recorded in Scripture that do not express God’s will or carry Divine authority—such as the sins of His people, or the sayings of the Devil, or the mere opinions of men—then, this also is true. It is also important to emphasise the fact ; because many have manifested such almost incredible ignorance on this as to imagine that when the Divine inspiration, truth, and authority of Scripture were upheld, it was thereby contended that everything narrated, or referred to in Scripture—even crimes and lies—was true and right, and had

God's approval,—not knowing that what Inspiration secured in such cases was simply a true record, but not at all necessarily implying God's approval, frequently the reverse. They were often recorded on purpose to express God's displeasure with them, to manifest the evil of sin, to warn others; and thus to teach important truths, and to serve the highest moral ends. This they did, not because they carried Divine authority, but because they incurred Divine condemnation. These ends were all the more effectually secured through their being truly recorded by the Spirit. Or if by this were meant that it is only when, and in so far as, the statements of Scripture are truly interpreted that they are trustworthy and of Divine authority, then again we cordially assent; nor can the importance of proper interpretation be overestimated. We accept, then, the statement that the Bible is true in all its teaching, and that it carries Divine authority, only when truly interpreted and expressing the Divine will.

WHAT INFALLIBILITY IN TEACHING MEANS.

But if this theory is designed, as it usually is, to deny that *all* Scripture is true and trustworthy, then all the arguments advanced above are equally valid and decisive against it; and some of them with even greater directness and force; while it is simply annihilated by some arguments peculiar or specially applicable to itself. We are at once confronted with the old, insuperable difficulties and fatal objections. How can we know the teaching of Scripture when the truth of its statements is denied? How are we to ascertain with certainty where the Bible is teaching, when, on this view, only some of its statements are reliable, without specifying which, or giving any rule by which we can surely find them? How can we be sure that we have found its teaching, its whole teaching, and nothing but its teaching, when we have been by this theory deprived of an authoritative standard? All this is patently impossible. Thus the very theory that declares the Bible infallible in its teaching, by denying its root teaching, that all Scripture is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, because God-breathed, contradicts itself, and makes it impossible for us to determine what that teaching is. The theory thus destroys itself.

Besides, if the theory means what it says, that the Bible is infallible in its teaching, then the upholders of it can, on their own view, be forced to receive our doctrine, and to abandon their own; for all that we ask is that they receive the teaching of Scripture declaring that it is true and authoritative—that they accept *this* teaching of the Bible; and if they do, as their own distinctive principle requires them to do, then they must abandon their own position and adopt ours. They are bound to confess that we are right when we teach that the Bible is true and trustworthy, and that they are wrong and self-contradictory when they affirm the infallibility of its teaching, and yet deny the truth and authority of its teaching on this its first and fundamental doctrine. For this is the teaching which lies at the basis of all its other teaching, and on which it expressly founds its claim over the faith and obedience of men in anything. For it can be demonstrated, as above,¹ that if the Bible teaches anything, it teaches, with a unique fulness and emphasis, its own truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority—the Word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth for ever. There is such an amount, variety, and explicitness of proof for this truth as can scarcely be produced for any other. Therefore, if the Bible is to be held as infallible in its teaching, it must be received as infallible when it teaches this basal doctrine. Therefore the upholders of this theory must, from their own view, receive our doctrine, or abandon their own theory. If we do not accept its teaching on this, we cannot accept it on anything; and if we disown its truth and authority on this, its primary root-doctrine and claim, it is vain, contradictory, and misleading to speak of the infallibility of its teaching at all. Therefore the upholders of this theory must, on their own principle, receive our doctrine, or stultify their own contention.

4. THE BIBLE INFALLIBLE AND AUTHORITATIVE IN THOUGHTS BUT NOT IN WORDS.

The last, and perhaps most plausible, of the theories of partial inspiration is that which, while not explicitly denying the infallibility of Scripture in its statements or substance, asserts its errancy and erroneousness in its words. While not denying the

¹ Books I. and IV.

inspiration of the thoughts, they deny that it extends to the words, and often ridicule what has been called "verbal inspiration." Some, holding this general theory, maintain that, while the writers of Scripture were inspired as to the matter of Revelation, they were left entirely to themselves in the expression of it. Admitting plenary inspiration as to the substance, they exclude inspiration of the words, and deny that the Holy Ghost gave or guided the expression of the substance.

Now, if the various forms of this theory were simply a protest against, and a rejection of, what has been called literal dictation, in which the writers are supposed to be mere amanuenses, writing the words dictated to them, we should not object to their purport and aim, while not approving of their expression. Or if they were designed as a denial of what has been called "mechanical inspiration"—though those using the expression have never yet defined precisely what they meant thereby, and would find great difficulty in doing so were they to make the attempt,—still, if by this was meant that the Bible writers were mere machines—the pens rather than the penmen of the Spirit—we should endorse the repudiation;—for, with the exception of a few passages, such as the ten commandments, written by God on the tables of stone, and rewritten by Moses by His express direction, and a few others, the Bible nowhere warrants or exemplifies this idea. On the contrary, its teaching and phenomena preclude this generally, and show that, while all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and as such is true, reliable, and authoritative, the writers were not machines, mere amanuenses, but intelligent men, moral agents, using in the writing of Scripture all their natural powers, characteristics, literary acquirements, and idiosyncrasies, as freely and fully as though they were not under Divine inspiration at all; while, at the same time, the Holy Spirit so guided the writers, and so acted upon their minds, without coercing them or hindering their spontaneity, that they should write only what He wished and as He wished; and thus it is, while truly man's, really God's Word.

CONTRADICTION OF BIBLE TEACHING AND CLAIM.

But this is not what is meant by these theories; on the contrary, the meaning or effect of their theory is to deny the

plenary inspiration and entire trustworthiness of Scripture by denying the truth or Divine authority of the Bible words, although they are the God-breathed words, expression, and embodiment of His mind, given in the words which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2¹³). These theorists, therefore, directly contradict the most explicit and pervasive teaching of God's Word, which declares and assumes throughout that the words of the Bible are the words of God, as given by the Spirit of God, as demonstrated above.¹ They thus condemn the most absolute teaching and invariable usage of Christ and His apostles; who frequently found great truths and arguments upon single words, and postulate and proclaim the inviolability of all Scripture even in jot and tittle (Matt. 5¹⁸). Besides, they err as to the chief object of inspiration, which is not so much the revelation of truth to the mind of the writer, though this is often implied also, as the expression and communication of the truth to others in what is written, and *as* it is written. Divine inspiration and consequent Divine truth and authority are predicated chiefly not so much of the truth as conveyed in the mind of the writer, but as specifically expressed in the written embodiment of the revelation. Further, it is simple absurdity to speak of the truth or authority of the thoughts, while denying this of the words—of the substance, while disowning it of the expression of Scripture. For the thoughts are in the words, and the substance can never be known except through the expression. The words express the thoughts, and are the embodiment of the spiritual substance. Therefore, if the words are erroneous or unreliable, so also must the ideas and the substance be. Thus the truth and Divine authority of all Scripture would by this theory be nullified.

Nor is this merely a self-evident proposition and a demonstration of the untenableness of this theory; but it is also vital to Christian faith and life. For if the words Godhead, election, redemption, imputation, regeneration, propitiation, sacrifice, atonement, faith, repentance, justification, sanctification, adoption, resurrection, heaven, hell, etc., were not inspired and infallible, and do not express veritable facts and Divine realities, then everything essential to Christian faith and life may be only old wives' fables. Without certainty and Divine authority in the words of Scripture, it is patently impossible to believe in the things, or even to know the will of God, for our salvation. Thus

¹ See Books I. and IV.

by the very vagueness and uncertainty this theory would bring into "the Word of Life," we should be driven out, without chart or compass, to seek for rest upon the restless, dismal waters of Rationalism and unbelief.

Hence by denying the truth and reliability, or asserting the indefinite erroneousness of the words of Scripture, men can be irresistibly driven into a position in which it is impossible legitimately to require, constrain, or warrant the belief of anything in God's Word; or to convince of error those who utterly reject it: and it becomes short and easy work for Scepticism to overthrow Christianity, and to plunge humanity into the bottomless and shoreless abyss of Rationalism and Agnosticism. So that from even the most plausible of these theories, there is a plain and inevitable path to Scepticism.

I have thus proved what was stated at the outset, that there is no logical resting-place between receiving all Scripture as true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority—as "in truth the Word of God"—and being driven out of Scripture altogether, into the hopeless chimeras of unbelief.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: NATURE AND SCRIPTURE.

Finally, this whole theory in all its forms is self-contradictory. The first principle of all these theories is that the design of Scripture is to give men a rule of faith and life. Now, if this is so, and we do not question, but believe it, why should it be taken for granted,—for the contrary has been shown above,—that there would be some—yea, many things, and kinds of things therein that do not affect these? Is this what we should expect in a book, written for such an end, under Divine direction, and by Divine inspiration? Is it like God to put, or to permit in His Word what would not in any way contribute to His design in giving it? Does it agree with the revealed character and work of God, either in Scripture or Nature, to make anything in vain, or to allow superfluities to burden or mar His work?

We know that Scripture everywhere represents God, in all His ways and works, in a character the reverse of this, and even declares that "the work of the Rock is perfect." We know that so far from permitting superfluities, Scripture is scrupulously careful in the selection of its contents, purposely sparing in its

materials, and evidently excludes much that would have been interesting and valuable in itself, and that we should have eagerly desired to know,—for the manifest reason that it was not necessary to its great design.

As for Nature, we know that if it abhors a vacuum, it still more abhors a superfluity,—that everywhere and in everything “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork.” The more extensively it is explored, and the more thoroughly it is investigated in all its realms and contents, the more it is found to be one great unity,—the more each separate part and particle, each world and atom is seen to contribute to its one great design, even its Creator’s glory,—and the more fully it is demonstrated that He has made nothing in vain. The law of parsimony, as scientists call it, holds and rules both in Nature and Scripture. Are we then to suppose that He would make or permit superfluities in His Word, or that anything would be put there that had no bearing whatever on its great design?

Still more, can we believe that, when it was as easy for Him to prevent it as not, He would permit such faults and errors to form part of it, as could not, as we have seen, fail to mar that design, and largely, if not utterly, defeat it? Therefore, the upholders of this theory are shut up to taking either of these contradictory positions,—namely, either it is not the design of the Bible to be a rule of faith and life, or there is not anything in it that does not affect, or that injuriously affects, faith and life. For if there is anything that does not affect faith or life, that design is marred by superfluity; and if there is anything that affects it injuriously, that design is so far frustrated. And since, on this theory, it is not one thing but many things that do so, and these not specified nor defined, but indefinite and unascertainable,—therefore, this design is unrealisable, and really subverted. If, then, they take the first, they abandon their own position. If they take the second, they adopt ours. If, according to their own first principle, they maintain that the design of the Bible is to be a rule of faith and life; and if they maintain, as they do, that this design was realised, then they thereby overthrow their own primary assumption, which is the very basis of their theory. They thus prove that their inference from their own first principle was not only not true but contrary

thereto. They also show that their other assumption and inference—that there are only some things in which Scripture is true and authoritative, it being in all others indefinitely erroneous, while neither the one nor the other is specified or determinable—is not only unwarrantable and false, but contradictory to their root-principle. They thus by their own principles not only annihilate their own theory, but establish ours,—so far at least as inferences from first principles and general reasonings can establish it.

And if they maintain their own first principle, while still striving to defend these false inferences from it, which are contrary to it, and also to imply that there are superfluities in Scripture, things in no way affecting its great design, and errors many and indefinite, things injurious to this great design, then, in addition to all above, we shall leave them with the steady and harmonious voice of Nature to rebuke them, the explicit teaching of Scripture to contradict them, the first principles of the inductive philosophy to repudiate them, the progress of Biblical scholarship to refute them, the inexorable laws of logic to annihilate them, and the testimony of Christian experience to disown them for ever. The voice of universal Nature rebukes them, as it everywhere, and always with one majestic voice proclaims, "The hand that made it is Divine," and made nothing in vain! The teaching of Scripture contradicts them, as it ever teaches, the Bible is the Word of God, and expressively says, "The work of the Rock is perfect." The words of Christ condemn them, as He solemnly declares, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The principles of the inductive philosophy repudiate them, as they refuse even to listen to unproved and unprovable assumptions to support a baseless theory. The progress of Biblical scholarship refutes them, as it shows difficulties to be vanishing quantities, and supposed superfluities proved to be significant and valuable parts of God's Word. The laws of inexorable logic annihilate them, as has been demonstrated above. And the testimony of Christian experience disowns them; as it proves from ever growing experimental knowledge of all parts and particles that "All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the

man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The conduct of these theorists strongly resembles that of those superficial naturalists who, when they could not easily perceive the use and design of certain organs in creatures and objects in nature, rashly pronounced them useless. A deeper and more scientific science waited, and investigated, and proved them in many cases not only useful but highly valuable; and showed the superficiality and perniciousness of the principle so unscientifically adopted; which would presume to make our knowledge the measure of reality and possibility, and our ignorance the proof of non-existence of universal design in nature. Such a principle would have paralysed science in the investigation of God's works, and this similar theory would paralyse progress in the study of God's Word. And the whole proves that, on this principle, these theorists make reason supreme over Revelation, and in so doing violate both reason and Revelation.¹

¹ In the Appendix there is a brief outline of the apologetic value of the truthfulness in small points, and even the minute accuracy of Scripture, along some leading lines of Christian evidence.

BOOK VII.

DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS: WITH FURTHER CONFIRMATIONS OF THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

RÉSUMÉ.

WE have now reached the closing Book of this work. A brief treatment of the subject will suffice, as the questions usually discussed under the head of difficulties and objections have been largely dealt with in the previous books. A re-glimpse over the course of the discussion will make this evident and the sequel the better appreciated. In Book I. Christ's place in theology, and His teaching on the chief truths of the Christian faith, specially on those controverted, and supremely on Holy Scripture, are set forth; and by this much recent teaching and religious speculation have been tested, sifted, and found false or wanting;—especially prevalent depreciations and perversions of the Word of God. In Book II. the supreme question underlying and raised by these discussions, viz. "Is Christ Infallible as a Teacher," is considered, and the claims of Christ and of Scripture to be the supreme Authority in religion and ethics are upheld, and many opposing errors and unsettling theories are exposed and refuted;—it being cogently urged that there is no stable or rational resting-place between the supremacy of Christ speaking in the Scriptures and the dismal abysses of agnosticism and unbelief. In Book III. many current misconceptions and misrepresentations are corrected and exposed; and the roots and bases of leading objections to the Bible claim endorsed by Christ, are thereby destroyed, as well as many common difficulties removed. The way has thus been cleared for the true statement of the question; and much cogent preliminary proof

is given along the course of the discussion. The great, final issue ever heaves in view through the mists of lesser controversies, that the Bible claim, sealed and urged by Christ, must be received, cannot be rejected, else the credibility and veracity of Scripture must be denied, and the truth and authority of Christ as a teacher, on the supreme and fundamental question in religion and morals, must be set at nought, and mankind deprived of any standard of faith or duty, or seat of authority in religion. In Book IV. the general Bible proof is given in leading outline, with emphasis on the principal passages, and with special applications to the present state of the question, and its bearing on Christian faith and life. In Book V. the opposing views are brought into contrast and comparison apologetically, and their comparative strength tested face to face with scepticism by the sceptic's apology. The result of this is that even the theory of "absolute inerrancy" is proved to be stronger from an apologetic standpoint than indefinite erroneousness; while the position of simple truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority is shown to be stronger and safer than either; as well as more fully established by evidence. The reply to the sceptic's apology is given in the amassed array of the Christian evidences, outlined from the standpoint of Christ, in our strong and impregnable middle position. In Book VI. the various theories of indefinite erroneousness are classified and examined, and shown to be all more or less essentially rationalistic in their common root principle and actual tendency. It is proved that they all necessarily end in the virtual and practical supremacy of reason over Revelation; and the consequent deprivation of men of any sure rule of faith or life, and of any reliable guide through life to immortality—that in fact there is no possible middle between accepting the Bible claim to be the Word of God,—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority—and ending in irrational rationalism, or absolute scepticism,—with all the disastrous consequences to Biblical study, Christian faith, and religious life.

THE ORIGIN, CAUSES, CHARACTER, AND HISTORY OF DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

In further dealing with difficulties and objections to the Bible claim and doctrine here, it is not possible or necessary to give

more than a general outline and summary of leading facts and principles, indicating their origin, causes, character, and history ; stating the principles on which they may be explained, the purposes they serve, the lessons they teach, and showing how reasonably any cases unsolved may, if need be, remain so without at all affecting the Bible claim, or the positive proof of it :—especially as this has been so largely done already—specially in Books II., III., and V.,—and as it has been often done in many works treating specifically of the question. These may be classified under two general heads :—those appearing in the Bible itself ; and those coming from other spheres or sources of knowledge :—the psychological, historical, and scientific, and the critical, moral, and spiritual. Many objections and difficulties have been urged from atheistic and antisupernatural standpoints ; which, of course, do not need to be dealt with here, as we are now treating of the views of those who believe in God, and the supernatural, and Revelation. These have been thoroughly met and answered in many able works on natural and revealed religion, and the Christian evidences ; and have been sufficiently dealt with in our reply to the sceptic's apology in the summary of the Christian evidences in the closing chapter of Book V., as well as in Book VI., and further answers will be found in the Appendix. The vast majority of the difficulties and objections arise from erroneous preconceptions and false presuppositions, untenable assumptions and unfounded assertions, strange misconceptions and persistent misrepresentations, by mistakes and mis-statements of the question, and actual creations of them where they had not a shadow of foundation,—with all the fallacious inferences therefrom, by those who urged them,—as shown largely before, specially in Book III. Often they spring from overlooking or insufficiently recognising the organic unity of Scripture, the progressiveness of Revelation, and the pervasiveness of the human and the Divine in the Bible. They frequently originate from magnifying apparent differences, while ignoring the far greater agreements between the Bible and other sources of knowledge ; and from overlooking its popular character, fragmentary nature, literary characteristics, peculiar origin, unique composition, and remarkable history. They arise, too, largely from confusing things that differ ;—the translations and present MSS. with the originals, traditional interpretations with the true meanings of

God's Word, the true record with the approved teaching, the writers' character and conduct with the written inspired teaching, imperfection with error, and discrepancy with disproof of the Bible claim, and imagining it was proof of the opposite, — while ignoring the whole positive, proper proof, and all the probable or possible explanations of seeming inconsistencies. They are the product, also, of inaccurate use of language, misuse of epithet, misleading terms and maxims, disintegration and separation of Scripture,—as if they had no unity or Divine origin ; wrong principles of interpretation, unscientific methods of criticism, misleading specialism, lack of carefulness in statement and thoroughness of thought, applying Western and modern standards to ancient and Oriental books, love of vagueness,—confusing the issues, aversion to definiteness or finality of truth, idolatry of doubt. Some arise from failure to carry out principles and theories to their logical conclusions, fear to face the ultimate issues, prevalence of pervertive prejudice, want of honest interpretation and consistent application. Some of them come from our ignorance, the limitations of our faculties, the nature of the subjects,—reaching out to infinity, eternity, and Divinity ; while others still arise from not sufficiently recognising the great purpose of the Bible, and the valuable uses and lessons even of difficulties in the Bible as in everything else. All this and much more has been shown and urged above ; and they are sufficient to account for almost all the difficulties, and to answer all the objections of any consequence ; and they supply or suggest the means and methods of reasonably silencing all objectors, if not of answering all objections and solving all difficulties.

CLASSIFICATION, ILLUSTRATION, AND ANSWERS TO DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

Before offering further explanations, a few more illustrations and answers may be useful from the classes mentioned.

1. Of the *Psychological* difficulties and objections, one urged is that the Bible claim involves the co-operation of God and man in the production of Scripture. Of course it does. That is the grand mystery, Divine secret, and real explanation of it. But surely that is no valid objection to it, but a strong confirmation of its truth, in harmony with all that we know and

believe, on the surest grounds, of the relation between God and man, and of the co-operation between the Creator and the creature in the works of creation, the events of providence, the operations of God's grace in men's hearts, and all the experience of life. And such a jejune idea could be conceived only on the vicious principles of that absurd philosophy and expired superstition, sought to be revived again in Ritschlianism, that would separate the creature from the Creator, deny relationship between the natural and the supernatural, exclude God from direct access to the mind of man, and preclude the possibility of the infinite Spirit of God acting on the finite spirit of man, even for the gracious purpose of giving a revelation of God's grace for man's salvation. A similar presumptuous and inane objection is, that such a control or influence over men's minds as would secure the truth and Divine authority of the Bible is inconsistent with the mental freedom of man;—as if God the Holy Ghost could not so act on the human mind as to ensure this without violating its free action, and must be confined within the narrow grooves of the oracular dictates of such audacious but unveracious speculation. Another like invalid objection is against the argument for the truth and Divine authority of Scripture from the testimony of the Spirit in the Christian consciousness,—to the effect that our consciousness may deceive us; which is nothing to the purpose, and no reason whatever against the validity of this evidence,—except upon the absurd assumption of a general denial of the veracity of consciousness, which means absolute scepticism, and is as destructive of the foundation of this objection as of all other human thought and reasoning.

2. Of *Historical* difficulties and objections to the Bible claim, arising from differences and seeming conflicts between the Bible and other records, in addition to all urged in the previous books, let it suffice to say further—First, that the whole weight and trend of recent historical investigation and archæological research are beyond question to corroborate and establish not only the historicity and credibility, but the truthfulness and trustworthiness, and even the minute accuracy in many cases, of the Bible record; as shown by a vast and ever-increasing mass of valuable literature by the foremost experts and highest authorities in collateral, historical, and archæological research,—specially, as stated before, in the hard facts and silent but unanswerable

testimony of the monuments, tablets, resurrected cities, mounds, libraries, etc., of ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria, Syria, Palestine, and Sinai;—as well as corroborative, written, and other evidence from Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, etc., from the literature, lands, peoples and usages of the East in touch and contemporary with the people of Israel and the literature of the Bible. Second, that any differences or conflicts between these records are trivial and as nothing compared with the great outstanding agreements—are only such as might be expected in the circumstances,—especially as only the Bible was written by Divine inspiration; and even here, too, differences are disappearing with fuller knowledge and advancing research. Third, so far, therefore, has this whole line of historical and cognate investigation been from discrediting Scripture, it has weightily tended the opposite way, and from independent sources strongly confirmed the Bible claim. It has exploded many would-be critical assertions, shown the baselessness of bold assumptions on which vast and ominous superstructures and theories were built, caused confusion among oracular rationalistic critics, discredited many of their finespun philological speculations, and created a profound and wholesome distrust of all their methods, results, and theorisings. And it has removed many once formidable objections and difficulties, illustrated again the principle of difficulties being vanishing quantities, and established the probability or at least the *possibility* of all vanishing with fuller knowledge and greater research,—which is the utmost needed to silence reasonable objection. Even that is not strictly required to maintain the Bible claim; for there are difficulties and objections to the best established truths and facts in every region of knowledge, life, and experience. And in our more guarded position taken for the defence of the Christian faith, or the unquestionable Bible claim, of simple truthfulness, instead of absolute inerrancy, the cases to which, on these sure and scientific principles, these difficulties would be reduced, would be so despicable or doubtful as to be unworthy of serious consideration, and utterly weak and wholly irrelevant as against our position. So that the whole strength of the positive evidence by which the thorough truthfulness of the Bible is demonstrated, would remain untouched and untouchable, backed by the whole weight of the Christian evidences.

3. SCIENTIFIC DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

3. Of the Scientific difficulties and objections substantially the same may be said, as shown before in various connections, and it is shown more fully in the Appendix. They not only do not invalidate or discredit the Bible claim, but they largely confirm it. The alleged discords and contradictions have arisen largely from overlooking that the Bible is not a scientific but a popular book, describing things as they would appear phenomenally, and from the standpoint of earth and man, and in their relation to God. It is written in the style and language of common life,—and not in the form of the science of any particular age, which would be superseded and held erroneous or defective in subsequent ages, but in the manner of the people, and for all time. Hence they never assume scientific form, nor do they generally profess to give precise accuracy. Nor, had they done so, would they have served their Divine purpose, which is to reveal God's will for man's salvation. And it is because these patent facts and first principles have been overlooked that most of the difficulties and objections have appeared. Many, too, have sprung from misinterpreting the statements of Scripture, or mistaking the facts or laws of nature,—thus creating apparent conflicts where they did not exist. Nor is there anything more imperative in the interests of truth and harmony than rigorously to exclude these conflict-making oversights and errors. But the remarkable thing is that, notwithstanding this, the agreements both in number and importance vastly exceed the paltry differences. They agree in the great leading facts, and differ only in comparatively trivial points; and even these have largely vanished through fuller knowledge and truer interpretation; as many that once seemed serious vanished long ago,—establishing a probability, or, at least, a possibility, that all will vanish yet, if they have not already gone. Certainly those remaining—at most only dubious—are so trivial as not to affect the Bible truthfulness, or the proof of it. Indeed, many of the highest authorities in science maintain the full harmony between it and Scripture;—even in that most disputed part—the Mosaic and the Geologic records of creation,—as may be seen, among others, in the vast mass of literature on it, in the works of Professor Dana, or of Sir William Dawson, twice President of the

British Association of Science. The remarkable fact is that the Bible, while not revealing science, or the writers knowing it, has yet been so written through them, that in the fierce light of the latest science its truthfulness has stood the test of the most searching investigation by the keenest antagonists,—the highest scientific authorities themselves being witness. And this fact, taken along with the other notorious fact, of the striking contrast in this respect presented by the erroneous, absurd, and even grotesque cosmogonies and theologies of all other ancient literature, is the strongest confirmation of the Bible claim, and demands God's supernatural guidance in the writings of the Bible as the only rational explanation. But the most amazing thing is that those who magnify any trivial apparent differences between Science and Scripture, should ignore the great outstanding agreements in the chief things; or imagine that any paltry trivialities constituted any valid objection to the Bible claim, so thoroughly established on its own proper evidence; or fail to see and own that in the great agreements between them, Science, so far from discrediting the truthfulness or Divine origin and inspiration of the Bible, only strongly corroborates them.

4. CRITICAL DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

Of *Critical* difficulties and objections arising from the facts and phenomena of the Bible itself, showing apparent discrepancies and seeming contradictions,—much has been said in the previous books, especially in Books III., V., and VI., and the most important of these have been there dealt with; and the principles have been indicated on which they may be all, or almost all, accounted for, or at least reasonably left unsolved, and objections silenced. It may further be said generally that what is true in these facts and phenomena has not been proved to destroy or discredit the Bible claim to be true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority; and those that would necessarily do so have not been demonstrated to be true, and have often been proved to be not facts but fables—mistakes, indeed, but of those who charged the Bible with them.

(1) *Misconceptions*.—Many of these, as seen, have arisen from misconceptions of the Bible claim and doctrine; and the objections made had no foundation save in the imaginations of those

who made them. Much perverting prejudice has been created by such misconceptions as the following:—First. That truthfulness meant absolute perfection, and that imperfection was equivalent to error or untruth;—when Divine truth cannot dwell perfectly save in the Divine mind, and when truthfulness is quite consistent with imperfection, else there could be no truth revealed by God to man at all. All the earlier stages of revelation are more or less imperfect, but they are all true so far as they go. The very idea or possibility of a progressive revelation requires this; but has also to postulate trueness and reliability in each progressive stage in order to the one fitting into the other, or to there being any progress in Revelation at all. As well reason or assert that the early stages of the development of life were false and wrong because they were imperfect, as that the earlier stages of Revelation were untrue and wrong because they were imperfect. For sooner will forms of life, good and perfect, develop from germs bad and false, than truth develop from error, or right evolve from wrong. In fact, such confusions would preclude progress either in life or Revelation. And so far from imperfection in the one or the other involving error, it excludes untrueness in both, and progress requires reliability from first to last. Second. Similarly many confuse incompleteness with untruth, although the one is quite compatible with the other. There may surely be truth without the whole truth. Otherwise, our Lord's teaching in the N.T. would be untruth; for He tells us that He had much to say to His disciples which He could not teach them then, because they were not able to receive it, and would only be so when the Spirit of truth came on them in the fulness of His power. The revealing God was, from the very nature of things, Himself under limitations and restraint in giving Revelation; because of the necessity of adapting it to the people and the age to which it was given. And those who raise this objection overlook also the patent fact of the fragmentariness of Scripture—fragmentary always as a history, but finally complete as a Revelation. Third. Another prevalent misconception, on which objection to the Bible claim has been based, is that it is supposed to imply that all parts of Scripture are equally valuable. But this is a pure imagination of the objectors. It is in all parts true, but infinitely diversified in value, as Nature is, yet all equally the

work of God. Fourth. A further misconception is that the Bible claim means rigid accuracy,—than which there could scarcely be a greater mistake. For nothing is plainer on the face of the Bible than that it rises sublimely above such punctilious rigidity; and moves with perfect ease, Divine freedom, and charming naturalness. And the inspired authors write with all the greater freedom, naturalness, and confidence, just because they are under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and feel the fuller confidence in taking the greater liberties because they know they are under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth.

(2) *Preconceptions*.—First. Here some outstanding preconceptions may be adverted to—such as the individuality of the writers and the diversity of the writings, so manifest in Scripture, on which many have foolishly founded objections to the Bible claim. But such objections are obviously based upon the absurd idea that the individuality of the Bible writers is necessarily inconsistent with its truthfulness, and that only rigid identity is so,—which is a baseless imagination. This also implies the presumptuous conception that the Spirit of Truth could not use the diverse gifts and acquirements of the creatures He has made, for giving His revelation without teaching untruth,—which is not only an unproved but an incredible idea, and an audacious presumption against the Most High. Why, it is just this unique unity in diversity which is one of the strongest proofs of the Divine origin and truth of the Bible; and the fact of its truthfulness, along with the individuality of the writers and the diversity of the writings, not only demands the supernatural origin of the Revelation, but demonstrates the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Second. A similarly unreasonable objection raised is, that if God had so much to do with the production of the Bible we should expect it to be very different from what it is—if it were the Word of God, it would not be so like the work of man—if Divine, it would not be so human! A vague and vain generality, long ago silenced by Butler's crushing stroke—that if God were to give a revelation of His will we are not fit judges of *how* He might be pleased to give it. And the idea that because it is so human, *therefore*, it could not be so Divine, is not only one of those baseless imaginations that such objectors are wont to create against the truth of God's Word, but it is also in itself so inherently improbable that the opposite is the probability, as we know it is the fact,

both in the Written and in the Incarnate Word. For both Scripture and Christ are so Divine just because they are so human : perfectly human and perfectly Divine in the first root article of the Christianity of Christ. Another unfounded preconception on which objections have been based is that in the historical parts of Scripture, and in all those cases in which the writers knew the substance of what they wrote, there was no need for special Divine inspiration : and that, therefore, it would not be given, as in the Gospels, referring to Luke's preface. That is, their own ideas of what was necessary, and not the teaching of God's Word, are made the basis of this theory, and of objection to the Bible claim. This theory, that would throw the whole historical portions of Scripture, which are its chief substance, into uncertainty as to whether it expressed God's will, would make us dependent in this vital matter upon the mere judgment of men instead of the wisdom of God ; and overlooks the great truth that essential parts of inspiration were the selection, arrangement, and expression in permanent form of what God wished to be in His Word. Similarly it is objected that some of the histories, as the Gospels, are not written in a strictly chronological order ;—as if that were the only way in which true history could be written ; and as if much higher and richer revelations of God in Christ had not been given us by the complementary character of the Gospels, and by each Evangelist writing from his own God-given standpoint, and in his own Spirit-inspired way. Again, it is objected that the Bible writers often utilise materials from outside and uninspired sources, books, decrees, letters, speeches, etc.—even of heathen and other people, and that for these, and all in them, Divine inspiration and approval could not be claimed. As if God's Spirit could not in anyway make use of such materials for the purposes of Divine revelation, or as if the use of these at all implied approval of all therein ;—when they are often quoted only for condemnation, at other times for only partial approval, when sometimes they are neither approved nor disapproved, but used for some other specific purpose. But they are always put in God's Word by His authority and inspiration to serve some good purpose of His grace, which they best do by being truly recorded, and properly interpreted by His Spirit's aid. A further objection is that such inspiration must be dictation. This makes men machines, and is

shown to be false by the variety of style, and the difference in the ways of recording the same substance ; and is an irreverent dictation to God,—as if the same substance could not be given with perfect truthfulness in different ways by men, or God, or both combined. It is also an inexcusable representation culpably persisted in by opponents of the Bible claim, though often repudiated and exposed by every intelligent defender of that claim.

(3) *Assumptions*.—Many objections and difficulties to the Bible claim have been made by the false assumption that the Bible is not a unity of many related and complementary parts, but a library or a literature of diverse and independent books. On this delusion objectors have proceeded, in the face of the plainest facts, to treat the individual writings in isolation ;—as if there were no others of the same kind, or as if they had little or no connection with each other, or were in antithesis and antagonism. Countless objections have thus been raised against the truth of Scripture, and by this perverse process of Bible disintegration the whole sources and bases of our faith have been brought to confusion and discredit. But it is only by shutting the eyes to the surest facts, recognised from the beginning, and patent on the very face of the Bible ; and by violating the primary canons of literary criticism, all the rules of Biblical interpretation, and the first principles of the inductive philosophy. As soon expect to properly interpret nature, and advance science, by studying its various parts and elements in isolation, and with no regard to the related parts, or to the whole of which each forms an integral part, or to the Creator Who is the Author and Uniter of all. No wonder that these should lead to indefinitely diverse and erroneous, but absurd results, from such pervertive methods, and land in all the evils of a narrow and perverse specialism. But the answer is that the vicious method is false and wrong from the foundation. True Bible science repudiates it as unscientific, because shutting the eyes to the most palpable facts, and ignoring the Divine authorship of God's Word ; and it ever interprets Scripture on the sound principle of the analogy of the faith, comparing part with part, on the sure bases of the unity of Scripture, on which the Christian Church has ever built its faith and life. Another fertile source of objection has been assuming that limitation of Knowledge necessarily involves error ; whereas, as proved in Book II., they have no necessary or natural con-

nection ; and in this case the reverse is necessarily implied, both in the Incarnate and in the Written Word of God ; because both are perfectly human and truly Divine. A further objection is that as the Bible is indefinitely erroneous now, it was so from the beginning ; and that it was of no use giving the Scripture pure and entire at first, if it has not been kept so since. In reply, first, it is not admitted, but denied, that Scripture is indefinitely erroneous now ; and all objectors have been baffled to prove even one demonstrable error. Second, even had the basal assertion been as true as it is untrue, the unproved inference would be false. As reasonably argue that since man is sinful now, *therefore*, he must have been sinful at his creation ! which is both error and blasphemy. And, third, though the Bible were erroneous now, the inference that it served no purpose to make it true at first is wrong. For, as it was of great consequence that man was not sinful at his creation, though he is sinful now—so it is with God's Word,—as proved before. The difference is radical between a Bible believed to have been at first erroneous and wrong, and a Bible originally right and faultless, but becoming more or less affected by transmission, etc. In the one case, the attitude assumed is that of an earnest student and a humble learner,—with all the spiritual blessing it ever yields to such. In the other it is that of a critic and a judge,—with all the religious loss involved therein, for it never yields its richest treasures to the critical spirit. In the one, there is the strongest stimulus to Bible study, in order to get nearer to the original and purest fountains of the life eternal there. In the other, it paralyses study ; for who would care much to search deeply or sympathetically a book claiming to be the Word of God, and yet indefinitely erroneous and originally wrong?—and without that reverent sympathy which this theory precludes, the results would be comparatively meagre, and never absolutely sure or Divinely authoritative.

(4) *Irrelevancies*.—Many objections to the Bible claim are irrelevant, and inadmissible from those who make them. One main, root objection to the Bible claim is God's use of human agency in the giving of His Word. But such an objection is not valid or admissible from those who hold the Bible to be inspired in any sense. If it has any validity, it would hold against every doctrine of inspiration equally. It is, therefore, totally irrelevant,

except from those who have audacity and credulity enough to deny revelation and inspiration altogether, or the co-operation of God with man in anything; which is as contradictory to fact and sound philosophy as to Scripture and theology. And yet elements of it unconsciously underlie some of the objections to the Bible claim, made by professed believers in Revelation. Akin to this is the objection made from the personal peculiarities of the writers manifest in the Bible. But this pervades the whole of it; and therefore, unless inspiration is to be denied altogether, this objection is quite irrelevant. Similarly many object to attributing what the Bible claims to the expression or the language of Scripture, and limit it to the substance; and others still deny this to both the words and substance, and limit it to the spirit of the Bible,—as, in rhapsody over this vague, elusive, fancied discovery, they revel in calling it,—just because it is vague and vapoury;—a kind of dim and misty thing, in which Coleridge revelled, when, because of his love of vagueness and mystery, instead of definite truth, he made his futile and unfair attack upon the upholders of the Bible claim, in his “Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,” long ago exploded, though repeated still. But it is a vain delusion, and an irrelevant and self-refuting objection. For the personal element pervades all Scripture, the spirit as well as the substance, and the substance as much as the expression. And if the personal or human element excludes or mars the Divine, or makes the product a mixture of good and evil,—then all is so,—the spirit as much as the substance, and the substance as the language. And who, then, can separate inerrantly the one from the other—the false from the true—in words, substance, or spirit? Or how is it possible to know the substance except through the expression, or to feel the spirit save through the substance, by the words? And if the human can coexist with the Divine in the spirit of Scripture and not impair its truth or authority, why not in its substance and expression? As Dr. Westcott says, “The Letter becomes as perfect as the Spirit” (or, keeping to our preferred term, as “true”), because “*all Scripture* is God-breathed (θεόπνευστος).” Hence, as Dr. W. Robertson Smith says, “the substance of *all Scripture is*” (not merely “contains,” which he repudiates) “God’s Word.” That substance is expressed, as its spirit is embodied and made known, only and truly in its

whole language; hence, as Paul by the Spirit says, "Which things we teach, not in words, which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And as all Scripture is God's Word, because God-breathed—expressing His mind, as man's words uttered by his breathing expresses his mind, therefore, every part and passage of Scripture expresses and embodies God's mind. So Dr. W. Robertson Smith says again, "What is no part of the record (expression or embodiment) of God's Word is no part of Scripture." And certainly no one who does not deny the Divine inspiration of any of the words of Scripture, or who does not disown that the Holy Spirit's inspiration did something special to secure the expression of God's Word in the language in which it is expressed (which would be to deny inspiration in the Bible sense altogether, and to disown the whole teaching of Scripture and of Christ upon the specific subject) can relevantly use any argument that directly or indirectly assails the Divine inspiration of the language of Scripture; for they simply refute themselves, and assail their own position. Nor can anyone who holds that God gave the substance of Scripture by inspiration relevantly urge any arguments against the Bible claim, or its upholders, that would at all affect its substance; for that is inadmissible from them, whatever it might be to others, and would be self-refutation. And, further, none who believe in Revelation can consistently use any arguments against the Bible claim that in anyway tend to question *that*; for this would be to stultify themselves, and to assail the position which they are, equally with us, bound to maintain. And yet these are the very things that unconsciously have been largely done by professed believers in Revelation. But they are wholly irrelevant, and totally inadmissible, from them, whatever they may be to rationalists and sceptics.

(5) *Discrepancies*.—Countless alleged discrepancies and seeming contradictions have been charged against Scripture. But it would be impossible to deal with them all here, or even in volumes. This has been more or less done in many books. And they have been largely dealt with above; and the principles on which they can be all accounted for and dealt with have been fully stated, especially in Books III., V., and VI.; and others of them are referred to in the Appendix to confirm the Bible claim. They are mostly trivial, and therefore need not

occasion concern, because they are only such as might be expected from the nature and the history of the writings. They are mostly easily accounted for ; in many cases probable, and in almost all cases possible, explanations can be offered. In no case is the possibility of explanation precluded ;—and a possible explanation is all that is logically needed,—nor, strictly speaking, is even this required, because there are difficulties in every sphere of knowledge, thought, and life. Besides, when they are trivial, as they generally are, they are of no weight against our position of thorough truthfulness, whatever they may be against absolute inerrancy. Further, as shown, many of the greatest scholars in all times, on opposite sides of the inerrancy question, have denied that one demonstrable error has been made out. And though there were, even inerrantists deny that Christianity is at stake on the issue ; and only admit that such would constitute a difficulty to their own doctrine,—to which all doctrines are open. Besides, they have largely vanished as knowledge has grown and investigation advanced, which establishes a probability that all may vanish. And though others have appeared, it is beyond question that the whole trend of discovery is to lessen and disperse them ;—as, among many, Professor Sayce, speaking for archæology, has said and proved. And what Professor Ramsay says of historical research, in the region of his recent investigations, as to the life of St. Paul in the Acts, might be said generally of the confirmations from history, that while “our information has hitherto been too scanty to justify us in asserting the absolute and perfect verisimilitude of the story, yet it is *equally certain that no error has yet been proved to exist*” (*The Expositor*, vol. ii. 4th series, p. 2). This testimony is all the more valuable that he went expecting to find the opposite, till the sheer force of evidence constrained this conclusion. So that the whole weight and drift of historical and archæological research tend to confirm the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and even, in many cases, the minute accuracy of Scripture.

The only other specific class of cases I can refer to here are connected with the death and resurrection of our Lord, and the quotations of the O.T. in the N.T. In regard to the latter, besides what is said before, I shall only say, that the very adducing these as objections to the Bible claim chiefly reveals

the misconceptions of those who urge them. They are based upon the absurd assumption that quotations must be made literally ;—as if God could not, and must not do, what man can do and does with his writings—use, adapt, alter, or add to, or give new meanings and applications to His own earlier Word ! It is a preposterous idea ;—all the more that, as seen, the N.T. expressly teaches,—and it is one of the strongest proofs of Divine inspiration,—that often the O.T. writers did not know the full meaning or scope of their prophecies. The Divine intent and content often transcended far the human conception ; as the Divine Giver and Inspirer Himself supremely showed as “God manifest in the flesh.” So that the fact which is the basis of the objection becomes, when properly grasped, a confirmation of the Bible claim. Besides, an examination in detail of the quotations only gives stronger confirmation, as is well shown, among others, by Dr. Patrick Fairbairn in his “Herm. Manual.” As to the former—of which the inscriptions on the Cross and the accounts of the resurrection are the chief—it is sufficient to say : First, although the inscriptions are not all literally the same, they are all true and identical in meaning ; and there is no contradiction or even discrepancy, though some are fuller than others, as is manifest on simple inspection ; and only wrong preconceptions could have suggested the strange idea that they touched the Bible claim. Second, as to the conflicting accounts of the resurrection, it is enough to say that they have been often shown to be reconcilable in various ways ; while the differences arising from their fragmentary character prove their independence, and confirm their truth ; and thus corroborate the Bible claim. Third, as to both these, and all connected with the death and resurrection of Christ, every Christian must believe in the truth and trustworthiness of the Bible records, and the consequent reconcilability of the various statements ; because they are radically related to the foundation and centre of the Christian faith. And the admission of irreconcilability, and still more the urging of contradictions, would weaken the evidence and cast doubt upon the reality of the resurrection, the foundation fact of our faith. Hence, among others, Huxley avowedly disbelieved the resurrection, not because of its intrinsic incredibility, but because of the unsatisfactoriness of the evidence, largely arising from the alleged

discrepancies. Hence, too, the Ritschlians and others hold it to be non-historical, and gave it no place in their system. This is more fully shown in the Appendix in minutiae. Let this further suffice here. To be of any weight, every alleged discrepancy must—First, be *proved* to have been in the original Scripture. Second, that the interpretation given is the only one true or possible. Third, that the other statements from Scripture itself, or history, science, philosophy, or other sources, are proved, and inerrantly interpreted. Fourth, the irreconcilability must be demonstrated, not only not reconcilable with our present knowledge, but necessarily and essentially irreconcilable. When these true conditions are fulfilled, it will be seen how quickly the discrepancies vanish, how despicable any remaining become, and how reasonably they can be left unsolved, in the light of the overwhelming mass and force of the positive evidence.

(6) MISINTERPRETATIONS.

Many objections to the Bible claim have arisen from wrong interpretations of Scripture. Some have so misread the Bible as to bring objections against it from the statements of Job's friends. But surely this is an obvious creation of objections where no grounds for any exist. For it is patent on the face of the book, and its allegorical character, and from the express words of God at the close, that God did not approve of all they said to Job, but condemned them for not speaking of God "the thing that was right" as Job had. Yet the true embodiment of them by Divine inspiration was useful. Others raise objection from the Epicurean statements in Ecclesiastes. But, like the case above, the inspired record of them implies no approval of them, and is only, by a well-known literary device, for the proper expression of current Epicurean ideas and ideals, in order to expose them in contrast with the Divine teaching and ideals summed up in the grand conclusion of the whole, "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Objections have been made against the truth that all Scripture is God's Word, because God-breathed, from the recurrence in Paul's writings of such phrases as "I speak as a man." In these he does not mean that what he says is not inspired of God; but that he uses men's ways of speaking and reasoning, etc., in order

the better to reach and save men ; but all is said and recorded through the Spirit in the best way to serve the Divine ends. Similarly, "I speak this by permission, not of commandment" (1 Cor. vii. 6). Here Paul teaches that marriage was always lawful, but not always, in exceptional circumstances, expedient. But all this was written through Divine inspiration, and none the less that it is thus guarded. He does not mean that he was permitted, but not commanded, to state this, but that what he said was given to them, not as a commandment, but as a permission, or better a concession (*κατὰ συγγνώμην*), as "by way of permission" (R.V.). Nor is the distinction between a counsel from Paul and a command from Christ, but between giving a commandment and giving a permission or concession as to marrying or not, in the then trying state of things. Nor was it distinguishing between what was said by inspiration and what was not ; for both the deliverance on the question, and the expression of it in Scripture were given by the Spirit. It was God who granted the permission as a concession, to marry or not as they judged best ; and by the Spirit Paul wrote this as it is written, as the Divine settlement of the question. And when in verses 10, 12 he says, "Unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord,—let not the wife depart from her husband. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord"—he does not mean (as many have imagined and drawn vast inferences from it opposed to the Bible claim) that what the Lord said was God's Word of Divine authority, and that what Paul said alone was merely his own uninspired opinion. But that, in the one case, our Lord had given during His earthly ministry an explicit deliverance, and in the other He had not ;—so that Paul could in the one, but not in the other, appeal to an express decision of Christ upon the question. But what Christ had not done, Paul now does in His name and stead, with full apostolic authority ; and places his deliverance given by the Holy Spirit on a level with Christ's as to truth and authority. And when, although he had "no commandment of the Lord," he gives his judgment as one faithful (ver. 25), that a virgin would be "happier" if she remained unmarried in the existing distress ; and adds, "I think also that I have the Spirit of God" (ver. 40), he does mean, as has been often urged as the basis of inferences against the Bible claim, that he had doubt as to whether he had the Holy Spirit's inspiration in

giving this judgment. For it would be an alarming revelation, unsettling the whole foundations of our faith, if the Bible writers were uncertain as to whether what they wrote was by Divine inspiration or merely their own opinion. But he means that, although he had no command from Christ upon this, he gave his judgment as an inspired apostle, and that he by the Spirit expressed the mind of Christ. For the "I think" (*δοκῶ*) is simply a polite Greek way of saying "I have," as all authorities teach, and the usage proves, and it is often used in cases where firm persuasion and assurance¹ are expressed (Gal. 2⁶, 1 Cor. 12²²). So that those passages which have been made so much of against the Bible claim are simply plain misinterpretations, which leave the Bible claim untouched, with all the massive proof from positive evidence.

5. MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

Much has been said on these before, and the general principles of explaining or dealing with them have been indicated; so that the less need be said now. Besides, many of the modes of removing the difficulties and answering the objections given above, in the other classes of cases, are applicable here also. Further, many able works have dealt with these,—*facile princeps* Butler's *Analogy*;—which with transcendent ability and unanswerable conclusiveness shows, by a comparison of Scripture with nature and providence, that similar difficulties appear in God's works to those in God's Word; and that the truths of Revelation are confirmed by analogous truths of nature and facts of providence. So that the manifest and manifold analogies between the moral and religious teaching of Scripture, and the course and constitution of nature, serve to show the Word and the works of God to be related parts of one whole scheme of Divine government and revelation, prove the truth, or at least show the probability—which is the guide of life—of the main truths objected to in Scripture; and thus render these objections invalid, and indeed irrelevant, as directed specially against the Bible, by any who believe in the existence and moral government of God. Similarly Dr. Chalmers has shown with his massive

¹ See Fawcett, Hodge, Calvin, Whitby, etc., *in loco*, and specially a masterly statement by Principal Cunningham, *Lectures*, pp. 389-400.

weight and overpowering eloquence, in his *Christian Evidences* and *Astronomical Discourses*, etc., that no difficulty has emerged in theology that had not previously emerged in philosophy, and how baseless and unscientific many of these objections are ; and that, in fact, these attacks on the Christian faith had not only been triumphantly refuted, but that the replies evoked had disclosed new and unexpected confirmations of the truth of Scripture, and produced fresh and strong defences of Christianity. Here again, too, as so often before, we have illustration of the confusion of thought and looseness of reasoning prevalent in the objections raised. Many of them are sheer irrelevancies as against Scripture specially ; for they are, if of any validity, objections against all equally. Those professed Christians who urge them against the Bible claim and our position are as much bound as we are to answer them ; for they hold, if at all, equally against their own position, and have no special bearing against our distinctive position in upholding the Bible claim. Many of the objections to matters mentioned in the Bible are related to and often rooted in the great mystery of suffering, the perplexing events of providence, the sufferings of the righteous, the prosperity of the wicked, the might of wrong, the struggle for existence, the reign of death, the prevalence of pain and misery, the continuance of evil, as

“Nature red in tooth and claw
With ravine shriek’d against the creed
That Love is nature’s final law.”

But surely these are not difficulties peculiar to the Christian faith, and objections arising from them, or connected with them, have no special bearing whatever against the Bible claim ! They are the stern and mysterious facts that surround equally all theology, philosophy, science, and life ; and which the rationalist, the sceptic, and even the atheist have equally to face, explain, and offer a solution of. And the Christian is confessedly the only solution that even approaches to anything like an adequate explanation, or that in any satisfying way casts any true or helpful light upon the profound mystery, or in any really comforting measure alleviates the darkness, or irradiates the gloom. Yea, in the Person of the Son of God and the Son of Man become the Captain of our salvation, He, as the head of a

renewed humanity, made perfect through suffering, has actually, by means of suffering, as our Brother-Saviour, made such a revelation of the righteousness and specially of the love of God as, without suffering, could never have been made,—aye, sheds such a blaze of light upon it, by His own unique suffering, as not only alleviates its gloom and comforts us amid its anguish, by his Divine-human sympathy, but helps us to endure its pressure, educe its good, utilise its virtues, and even to transmute its severest ordeals into enriched character, perfected life, and eternal glory. And since the Bible does so, it gives us the true key to the solution, proves its own truth and Divine origin, and sheds the only satisfying light upon these great mysteries. But that anyone, and specially anyone believing in Revelation, should imagine that because these things are found in the Bible as everywhere else, *therefore*, the Bible, or the upholders of its claim, are specially bound to answer any objections, or to remove any difficulties connected with them, or that they have any special validity or force as against Scripture, or any particular view of it, is a strange hallucination. They are, in fact, totally irrelevant as objections against the Bible claim specially.—Nay more, so far from these difficulties constituting any objection peculiar to the Bible claim to truth and Divine origin, they, on the contrary, are, as Butler has unanswerably reasoned, a proof or confirmation of these. For since there are difficulties connected with the works of God in nature and providence, the existence of difficulties also in the Word of God, in our present limitations,—specially in those things that reach out into infinity and eternity, and the mysterious region of the interaction of the human and the Divine will—serves to show that they are akin, and bear the marks of infinitude and mystery common to all the revelations of the Creator to the creature. And since to finite minds they are in all the works of God, the absence of them in Scripture would raise real difficulties and objections to its being the Word of God, and constitute the greatest of all difficulties—the difficulty of having no difficulties, the mystery of having no mysteries in what came from the Infinite to the finite.

6. SPECIFIC KINDS AND EXAMPLES OF DIFFICULTIES AND OBJECTIONS.

Some specific examples of various kinds will suffice to disclose their origin, and to indicate the principles of their explanation. One whole class of objections arises from the *oversight* of the crudeness of the moral ideas and conditions of the times and peoples to which the earlier revelations were given; and the consequent imperfection of these necessitated in the circumstances. If the revelations were to be truly helpful they must be adapted to the existing conditions in the successive ages, on the sound principle necessarily adopted by all wise teachers, emphasised by our Lord in teaching men as they were able to bear it,—thus leading them gradually up to higher moral ideals and religious life. The character of the Revelation was necessarily conditioned by the moral state and religious conceptions of the age and the people they came to. So that there was Divine wisdom, even Divine necessity, in God giving a progressive revelation according as men were able to bear and to profit by it. This explains the imperfection of the earlier stages of Revelation, and accounts for our being staggered at some things in the earlier Scriptures when looked at from our higher levels. The limitations of men's mind imposed limitations on the revelations of God's will. The overlooking of this obvious fact and principle explains the rise and answers many of the objections unreasonably brought against the Bible; and the recognition of it removes many of the difficulties. Similarly wrong *preconceptions* as to the relation of God to many of the things recorded in Scripture, accounts for whole classes of objections urged against the Bible claim:—such as the faults and sins of its best characters, the crimes and abominations narrated, and God's using of very faulty, and sometimes even wicked, men for the highest functions, and the most distinguished services—such as Abraham and Jacob, David and Peter, Balaam and Caiaphas, being made organs of Revelation, and channels of blessing. But the sins of the good men are not approved but condemned, and dealt with more severely than the sins of others, just because they are His people. Their secret sins are set in the light of His face; and, in striking contrast with other biography, they are held up with awful truthfulness in the fierce light of God's burning holiness; revealing that the Lord is a most holy

God, as well as a gracious Father, who cannot tolerate evil in His nearest friends or greatest servants. That is the unique glory of the Revelation and religion of the Bible ; which, so far from discrediting the Bible claim, establishes its truth, and demonstrates its Divine origin. And the using of faulty, and of even wicked men, as organs of Revelation, in the one case, makes them the better fit to be channels of salvation to sinners, and, in the other case, makes even enemies witnesses to the truth and Divine origin of God's Word. Besides, bad men have sometimes been our best teachers, by the burning expressions of their own experiences—witness Byron, and Napoleon's St. Helena utterances. And, further, were God not to use imperfect and sinful men, He could not use men at all.

Akin to this are the objections arising from *misconceptions* as to the interpretation of Scripture ;—it being erroneously imagined by many that all, and all in, the writings of the Bible are approved by God, and held up as the standard of moral and religious life. But this, as seen already, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, and the wrong teaching of Job's "miserable comforters," is manifest misinterpretation. The same may, perhaps, in measure, be said of what has been misnamed the "Vindictive Psalms." There are no Psalms deserving such a name, when truly interpreted. But while much that has been said against these Psalms is utterly false, and the baseless errors of those who object to them,—inasmuch as, to say nothing else, personal revenge cannot be proved in any of them ; and although what has been urged against them might, perhaps, be all explained, or at least silenced as valid objections,—because those on whom punishment seems invoked are regarded as the enemies of God and His people, and express mainly the deep sense of moral wrong perpetrated by those who shed their righteous blood like water,—as they committed their cause to Him to whom alone vengeance belongs ;—yet the Bible claim does not necessarily commit the upholders of it to every word or sentiment in these Psalms, or other inspired writings, as right, or sanctioned by God, or a standard for us now under the climate of the Cross, and the prayer of the Crucified for His enemies,—though He, too, protested against wrongs done Him, and said God would avenge His elect (Luke 18⁸ ; Rev. 6^{10. 11}). The Bible, like every book, must be truly interpreted in every part to find its real meaning ; and that, too, in the light

of all its other teaching, before we can be sure that any part expresses the will of God, or is intended as an ideal for us; and only when it is so can it be held to be sanctioned by God, or the Bible claim be open to any objection at all; yet it is all part of God's Word, and there by His authority, and through His inspiration, to serve some high or useful moral and spiritual end. It is often uncertain whether parts of it are in themselves approved or not, or only quoted, or recorded for some other end of Revelation. Therefore, true and reverent criticism will in such cases hold judgment in suspense until the true meaning has been surely ascertained; and it is only prejudiced and unjust criticism, bent on *making* difficulties, that could in such cases raise objections. And yet many of those brought against the Bible claim are of this nature, and are, therefore, no valid objections at all.

Other objections arise from *ignorance and presumption*, such as the clamant cry raised against children suffering from the sins of their ancestors! And yet this is the principle, on its punitive side, written by the very finger of God on the tables of stone in the second commandment. It is the law of nature, made by nature's God, and lying of necessity in the very constitution of things among related beings; so well known to science and experience as the law of heredity, patent and persistent every day in every relationship of life; which only fools shut their eyes to, and knock their heads against, and, when they have done so, have the imbecility to charge as an objection special to the Bible,—which, had it no other, has at least this proof of its truth. This kind of objection, which, of course, has no validity or even relevancy as against the Bible claim in particular, would shut out the operation of that great beneficent law of being by which the greatest blessings of providence and grace come to mankind. For “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of them that hate Me,” is only the obverse side,—the evil consequences—of violation of the great and gracious law of God's moral government, called by science “heredity” and by theology “imputation.” In virtue of it God, in providence, is ever “showing mercy unto a thousand generations” (R.V. margin, and Deut. 7⁹) “of them that love Me and keep My commandments.” Through it, in grace, “we are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”; and by it “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto

men their trespasses"; for "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein He freely pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." So that the objection, if it had any validity, would preclude the principle which lies at the basis of the world's redemption by a gracious God! as also all the blessings of life which come through the principle of representation;—though sometimes evil may come through men's abuse and violation of it,—yet that is not its Divine purpose, which is wholly good and ever gracious.

OBJECTIONS TO DIVINE JUDGMENTS.

Other whole classes of objections arise from the *vain imagination as to Divine judgments* being morally wrong. On this baseless basis such events as Samuel hewing Agag the king of the Amalekites to pieces before the Lord, as he had made many mothers childless by his wickedness and cruelty: and as his people had invoked the curse of God upon them by their enormities and abominations; and had most wickedly sought the destruction of God's people, making their harmless way through the wilderness under the visible leadership of Jehovah to the land of their fathers,—where they were to be trained to be the medium of salvation to the world; and had ever since sought their destruction by an implacable hatred,—thus wickedly persisting in seeking to thwart the gracious purposes of Almighty God. Also Elijah slaying the prophets of Baal who had seduced Israel into idolatry; and bringing fire from heaven to kill the soldiers who were sent to drag him to death for his faithfulness to Jehovah,—though he spared those who begged him to go with them, and could have destroyed none of them had God not sent the judgment. Elisha smiting the cruel and marauding Syrians with blindness when they sought his life as a prophet of God,—though when he had humbled them he feasted them. Paul's smiting Elymas with blindness,—though he was "full of all subtlety and mischief, a child of the devil and the enemy of all righteousness," who persisted in "perverting the right way of the Lord," and by his sorcery seduced men to their perdition, and was caught in the very act of attempting wickedly to turn away the Roman deputy from the faith,—and though Paul did it "full of

the Holy Ghost !” Peter declaring unto Ananias and Sapphira that they had lied not unto men merely but unto God, so that they fell down dead. Our Lord casting the evil spirits out of the demoniac, and permitting them to go into the swine, though in mercy to the man, and in judgment on the people for their sin, designed to lead them to repentance ending in salvation ; and His cursing the fruitless fig-tree, as a warning to the grace-abusing Jews. Also such events as the judgment of the Flood, because the iniquity of mankind was so great that “it repented the Lord that He had made man” ; the destruction of the cities of the plain by fire, because their sin had come up crying for judgment to heaven ; the drowning of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea, when after long hardening his heart, he pursued God’s people to destroy them ; and the awful destruction of Jerusalem, as foretold with breaking heart by Jesus, after its long day of grace had ended, and its sin culminated in the crime of crimes in Christ’s rejection and murder. In regard to these and all such things in Scripture, suffice it to say, besides what may be said for each of them, as indicated above,—First, that objections to these and such like are not peculiar to the O.T., but common to N.T. and Old ; not only to the prophets and apostles, but also to the Lord Himself. For He did one of the most objected to, foretold the most terrible of them, and as the God of providence foreordained and effected all. And though He delights in mercy, and judgment is His strange work, and He died to save, and waits to be gracious, He will yet, when the long day of grace has closed at last and “the great day of His wrath has come,” give a still more awful manifestation “of the righteousness of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,” when “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire taking vengeance on all them that know not God, and obey not the gospel, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe.” “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal.” The revelations of that great judgment day will crown and seal the truth and righteousness of the past judgments, with the Book that records them ; and the facts of these support the prospect and show the moral necessity of that great final judgment. Second, these objections have no

special bearing against the Bible whatever. For they are facts of history, and the experience of life, as well as the revelations of Scripture. If they have any validity at all, the historian, and the sceptic, and every man is just as much bound to answer them as the Christian. But the Bible is the only book that sets them in the proper light in relation to sin and God, and alone reveals the Divine way of escaping or utilising them. Third, the idea that the upholders of the Bible claim have any special obligation to answer the objections based on such a delusion is, therefore, an obvious absurdity. For, if they have any point at all, it is against not the Word of God, but against the moral government, and the very existence of God; and were these and the Bible gone, the stern facts remain for all equally, without one beam to cheer the eternal night.

EXPULSION OF THE CANAANITES.

Akin to this, another great outstanding objection, which has been the big gun, not only of sceptics and rationalists, but of some evangelical opponents of the Bible claim, is the command of God to *drive out the Canaanites* from the promised land. But what does it amount to after all? but simply another illustration of the righteous judgment of God upon tribes whose cup of iniquity flowed over, calling loud for judgment upon their crimes and abominations; in order to replace them by the people to whom the God of all the earth had given the land in promise, and in fact centuries before; in order that He might train them there to be the people through whom all the families of the earth should be blessed,—the people who, through their Bible and their Christ, have been the hinge, spring, and source of the world's salvation, and of the moral and religious progress of the race. That God did command this, and by His power and personal presence ultimately accomplish this, whatever faults of men may have mingled with it, are the clearest pervasive testimony of God's Word, and the surest facts of history. To deny this is to deny the truth and trustworthiness of the foundation facts of the whole Bible history, and in which its whole revelations have their source and substance. The proper conclusion from which would be to deny the truth and trustworthiness of all history and all Revelation; for no other history is better established, and the

Revelation is in and *through* the history—the history embodies and constitutes the Revelation. To admit the truth and reliability of the history, or of this first root fact of it, and to say that what was done was morally wrong, is to say that God commanded, and by His power accomplished, what was wrong! It means that the whole conception and execution of the primary and basal movement in the history of Israel and of the world—from the deliverance out of Egypt till the settlement in Canaan, with all that followed from it in Bible history down to the coming of Christ, and the close of the Apocalypse—(for it is all rooted and involved in the first great movement)—was morally wrong,—which is a preposterous and blasphemous imagination. If, on the one hand, the truth of the history and God's relation to it are discredited, then the truthfulness and trustworthiness of the Bible history are destroyed at its foundations; and it would be idle then to inquire what its teaching or revelation is; and the proper conclusion from that would be to disbelieve all history! If, on the other hand, the history is held to be true, or in this root fact in substance trustworthy, but that what was commanded by God, and carried out through His power by Israel, was morally wrong in its first and fundamental movement, of which all the rest was simply the intended outcome,—then, the history of Israel was rooted in wrong, and the religion of Israel founded in unrighteousness, and the God of Israel impossible as an object of worship. “And there's an end on't.” But if the history is true, as true it is, if ever history was; and if the whole Divine movement from the call of Abraham, and the deliverance from Egypt, to the settlement in Canaan, and the coming of Christ to be the Saviour of the world, was a movement of Divine grace by a God of love and holiness, through a people chosen and fitted for such a great and gracious end,—as it surely was, if ever such a movement was on earth,—then the settlement of the chosen people in the chosen land for this grand moral experiment, and the better fulfilling of this gracious spiritual function for mankind, by clearing out the idolatrous races whose abominations had polluted the land, when the cup of their iniquities was more than full,—so far as that was necessary to these high ends,—was not only a righteous, but a gracious movement for the highest good of all people. It was love marching through righteousness and mercy to salvation. And even the judgment that overtook the tribes replaced was

only the righteous punishment demanded by their sins and abominations, on the principles of God's moral government, as exhibited in the judgments ever overtaking men and nations that persist in wickedness and despise grace. It is writ large in human history in letters of blood and fire in such dread destructions as the Flood, Sodom, Egypt and the Red Sea, Nineveh and Babylon, Tyre and Sidon, Chorazin and Capernaum, Jerusalem ; and will yet be more awfully manifested in the final judgment of the great and terrible day of the Lord, when "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Of all these the Saviour of the world Himself spoke with such awfulness in tears, as the inevitable doom of all who persist in sin and despise mercy. So that it is with Him finally all objectors have to deal about these facts of history, which are the righteous judgments of God. Even Ingersoll admits that the God of the O.T. is like the God of nature now.

But it is a curious inconsistency in Sceptics to object to these things being recorded in the Bible without feeling bound to explain them in history, or to account for them in life ;—especially as they are the outcome of the laws of nature, and are the principles that unquestionably govern the world to-day. It is a strange delusion that any rationalist who believes in God and a moral government should imagine that any believer in Revelation was more bound to answer any objections made to such facts than he is himself, for they apply equally, if at all, to his own view. It is a remarkable confusion that any Christian should condemn the conquest of Canaan while approving, as many rightly did, the conquest of the Soudan at enormous sacrifice of life, and many other conquests by Christian nations in our day ; for the sins and crimes of the Canaanites were immeasurably worse than those of the Madhi and his followers—bad though they were ;—and the benefits of British rule in the Soudan, great though they will doubtless be, are not to be compared with the blessings, temporal and eternal to the world, that came through the settlement of Israel in Canaan. And it is an amazing absurdity that any evangelical errorist should dream that the upholders of the Bible claim are specially bound to answer objections to the expulsion of the Canaanites, when they as well as we are equally bound to answer any such objections ; for they apply to the root, basis, and substance of all Scrip-

tures and Revelation, and when they are really not valid objections at all, either to Scripture or history, nature or providence !

Only one other class of objections will we refer to here—those arising from *confusions and assumptions as to temptation* ; in such cases as God being said to tempt Abraham, etc., an evil spirit from the Lord coming on Saul, lying prophets deceiving ungodly kings, etc., to their ruin, the hardening of men's hearts, the temptation of Adam and of Christ, and even the existence of temptation at all. Some of these are *only distantly related to* the defence of the Bible claim, and none of them apply specially to our position, but apply, if at all, equally to all who believe in the Bible or God. Let it suffice to say—First. That God never tempts to evil, but seeks to test, to exercise our moral nature, and to perfect thereby. Second. When evil spirits are said to come from God, or lying prophets of their own to ungodly and disobedient men, it is in judgment for sin and misuse of grace ; and usually means permission given to evil spirits, lying prophets, or their own evil passions to deceive and afflict them. They are left to themselves, and their own evil hearts, and all evil influences and powers, in judgment. So similarly when God is said to harden men's hearts, like Pharaoh ;—the words used about him being most significant, the emphasis, in the early stages, being laid on Pharaoh's self-hardening, and in the later stages, when mercy's strivings have passed into judgment, it is laid on God's part in the hardening—that is, in withdrawing His grace,—and leaving him alone to the obdurate effects and tendencies of his own evil heart, and long, wilful resistance of the mercy and grace of God,—together with all other hardening influences and powers, till at length he was hardened to destruction. Third. Temptation was not an evil but a good, as designed by God, and when properly used by man. It may become a curse by our yielding to it, but it was meant to be a blessing ; and when we resist and overcome it, our moral nature is developed, and our character perfected by it ; and we rise to ever ascending moral levels, till at length we, by temptation, are made perfect. Hence the history of sinless but imperfect man began in temptation in Eden, with a view to, and as the means of his perfection. And the public history of the Son of Man began in a desert with a devil ; and by that struggle, in which He overcame, He, too, was developed morally and spiritually. So through all His life of trial and

suffering, which was all temptation, He was being perfected, till at length, by His agony in the Garden, and His anguish on the Cross—which were His severest temptations and His crowning perfectations—He, as the Son, our Brother, “learned obedience by the things that He suffered,” and as the “Captain of our Salvation, was made perfect through suffering.” And, having been “tempted in all things like as we are, yet without sin,” He, because He overcame temptation, became the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him, and follow Him in utilising temptation for perfection, and transmitting suffering into glory. So that temptation is a gift of God, and a means of grace,—a ladder by which we, utilising it for its Divine intent, may rise from imperfection to perfection, through suffering to glory. And all objections to it are, therefore, based on error as to the purpose and value of temptation.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.

This book has thus dealt with all the chief kinds and classes of difficulties and objections to the Bible claim, as well as with the leading specific objections ; and others are dealt with in the Appendix. It proves how largely they arise from the misconceptions and preconceptions, mistakes and confusions of those who charge the Bible with their own errors. It shows how baseless they often are, how largely they vanish before proper interpretation, how easily hosts of them can be explained, how trivial they mostly are, and how despicable they often become. It states the way in which they can be accounted for, the principles on which they may be explained, the methods by which they may mostly be removed, and the grounds on which they may be answered, or reasonably left unsolved. As seen, there are difficulties connected with, and plausible objections to, the truths and facts in every sphere of knowledge, action, and experience, arising from our means of knowledge, the limitations of our powers, and the greatness and often mysteriousness of the subjects to finite minds. And since these are found everywhere, in nature and providence, in science and philosophy, in all life and experience, if they are also found in Scripture it is only what we should expect, if it is the Word of God. Yea, we should wonder were there no difficulties or mysteries in anything coming from infinite

God to finite man, and be disposed to question its Divine origin were it not in this like His other works. Its very difficulties show its Divinity, and the absence of difficulties would be a real difficulty, and the ground of more plausible objection than those made from its difficulties. Many of the difficulties and objections raised have only brought additional confirmations. And whatever may be the explanation of any remaining difficulties, besides those in the very nature of the subjects, they leave untouched and untouchable the whole positive evidence, which is the only proper evidence. In Scripture, as in every other region of knowledge, we must go by this, and refuse to be deterred from believing and acting on truths proved by their own proper evidence,—leaving any difficulties to be solved by fuller knowledge, or reasonably left unsolved if need be, till fuller light comes. If we were not to believe anything till it was entirely free of difficulty, or plausible objection, then we should believe nothing. The prime truth of Science—universal gravitation—is not yet free of difficulty. And the first truth in religion—God is love—is by no means free of difficulty; and plausible objections have been urged against it from terrible and staggering things in nature, providence, and life. So, also, in almost every truth in both. But reasonable men are not by these kept from believing in gravitation, or in God; and why, then, should they in believing the Bible claim when, like these, it is established on its own proper evidence? No! difficulties must be there, from the nature of the case. Difficulties are there by the purpose of God. For they serve high ends for the good of men. They show us our ignorance, and reveal our limitations. They teach us humility, and train us in patience. They stimulate us to study, and lead us to new truths. They give fuller knowledge of God in Christ, and deeper experience of eternal life. They try our faith, and trying strengthen it. They test our character, by God giving sufficient light for all that is necessary to salvation and guidance in life, and growth in grace, if only we will walk in it; but they leave sufficient darkness to stumble over, if we *will* stumble, and refuse to follow the light; so that they thus prove a moral test by which we may rise to higher moral levels, and greater spiritual attainments. They discipline our life, and lead us to a more entire dependence upon God, in Bible study as in everything else; and they keep us waiting on the Lord

“till the day dawn and the day star arise in our hearts.” Thus the Bible difficulties are blessings in disguise.

But if our opponents *will* magnify difficulties and multiply objections, then, how strange and self-contradictory that they entirely overlook the infinitely greater difficulties of their own systems and theories ; and that they never seem to imagine that they have anything to do with removing the insuperable difficulties of their own theories. In fact they are all difficulties and objections together ; and therefore, on their own principles, these difficulties should be incomparably more fatal to their own views. Let the sceptic only face the overwhelming difficulties and unanswerable objections to scepticism in the light of the whole evidences of Christianity, even as outlined above, and he may well see how hopeless is the task he has, on his own principle of making so much of difficulties ; as he is bound satisfactorily to answer every one of them, for each of them constitutes a difficulty to his unbelief, nor can he answer or remove any one of them.—Let the rationalist similarly face and answer all the difficulties and objections to his rationalism, which every line and particle of the whole massive evidence for Divine Revelation constitute to his irrational system ; and he, too, may well abandon the attempt in despair, for he is simply buried under overwhelming difficulties. And, finally, especially let the errorists, who teach the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture, only face all the vast array and sterling character of all the evidence and argument even in this work, and he also may be pardoned if the very thought of it paralyses him, and arrests his attempt ; for every item of the evidence, as proved before, constitutes an incomparably greater difficulty to his vague and vapoury theories, than any number of alleged discrepancies does to the Bible claim ; because every item of it is proper positive evidence ; but his alleged discrepancies are no proper evidence at all, and form no real difficulty or valid objection to the Bible claim,—especially as against our guarded and impregnable middle position.

CONCLUDING EXPLANATIONS.

In closing this book, I am wishful by a final statement to avoid misconception as to the precise position held, and to state carefully what seems to be the true doctrine of Holy Scripture as taught by Christ and His apostles and prophets, through the

Holy Spirit. I have repeatedly emphasised above that I do not commit myself to what has been called "absolute inerrancy," and have urged strongly the unwisdom of staking the Christian faith upon that theory. Yet I have also, specially in Book V., referred to what seems to favour it, and shown what it can say for itself and the defence of Christianity against Scepticism; and how much stronger it is apologetically than the theory of "indefinite erroneousness." This two-sided treatment of it may seem to some inconsistent, or unwise, and others may think I should either adopt or reject it. But in reply and explanation, it may be said—First. That no one is required logically to either adopt or reject it; we may reasonably decline to do either, from lack of evidence, or hesitation as to its absolute decisiveness, or from feeling the unwisdom of staking such momentous issues upon theories about which there was any possibility of question. Second. With the vast majority of the best Biblical scholarship of the world in all ages, as seen, I am not satisfied it has been *disproved*, when it is held of the original Scriptures, truly interpreted;—even leading writers on opposite sides of the question of Bible infallibility maintaining that no "demonstrable error" has yet been proved beyond dispute, or possibility of removal by fuller knowledge. And, with many of the first scholars of the day, in full view of all the alleged errors and objections urged, I still think that the balance of probability is against the errorists, and lies with those who, like Bishop Westcott and Principal Rainy, etc., still retain the view that, *if we knew all*, the remaining difficulties and discrepancies would probably vanish, as so many have done. Third. Yet there may be room for doubt whether any evidence seeming to favour "absolute inerrancy" so proves it to be the Bible claim as to preclude every other view less absolute than that; and, in any case, since it may be and is a matter of doubtful disputation, it is most unwise to stake the Christian faith upon it, or to make it an essential matter of faith. Fourth. But if the evidence may not indisputably prove "absolute inerrancy," it does demonstrate *at least* that the Bible claims to be the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. Therefore, we take our stand on this as the unquestionable teaching of Scripture as to itself; and as the sure, and immovable ground for the defence of Christianity against all unbelief. Fifth. It is but just and right that,

when declining to adopt, or to be committed to, "absolute inerrancy," whatever may be said for it should be fully and fairly recognised. Sixth. We do not deem it unwise to have urged for it what has been urged apologetically, as compared with "indefinite erroneousness," in defence of the Christian faith, from that position; for if it has been able to defend itself so long, and if such a defence as has been outlined can be made from even that outmost position, it tends to show how strong and impregnable our more guarded and less advanced position is; so that it thus becomes a valuable outpost.

Similarly, if it should seem that any of the evidence adduced supports or seems to favour inerrancy or infallibility, then, I have no objection, so long as it is the true interpretation of Scripture, or cannot be shown to be forced; for if it seems to prove more than I choose to claim, and to go farther than the position I take my stand upon, then, this only strengthens mine the more, and proves that *this at least* is sure. If it supports the outpost, how much more the citadel?

THE TRUE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

This leads to the statement of the doctrine of Holy Scripture. This has been often stated in various forms; and the evidence itself is the best statement, as well as the proof, of it; and it is only when the full evidence and the whole facts connected with it are seen and duly appreciated that the complete statement is given and realised. We have usually expressed it concisely that the Bible is the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, and the Divine rule of faith and life, as originally given and when truly interpreted; or that the Bible is the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority *in all its* TEACHING, and the Divine rule of faith and life. It is so in *all* its teaching, and not merely in its teaching on faith and life,—though, as the Westminster Shorter Catechism truly states, this is what "the Scriptures *principally* teach." We say it is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority in *all* it teaches—whether principal or subordinate, when it, as originally given, is truly interpreted, and surely ascertained. All of it, too, more or less, in some way or other, affects, and may affect, faith and life; because, as the Holy Spirit, its Divine Author, says, through Paul, as also through

Christ and all the apostles and prophets, "ALL Scripture is God-breathed (*θεόπνευστος*), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." This was the purpose for which it was given by God, and every part of it contributes, or may contribute, in some way and measure to this end; and no part of it mars or fails to serve this end. It is all profitable, and no part of it is useless, or superfluous; as itself teaches, and Bible Scholarship and Christian experience are proving more and more, unto the perfect day. Every element, item, and expression here used has been proved fully by the evidence from the Bible itself, and corroborated by other evidence. As seen, the expression "the Word of God," with its equivalents in many diverse forms, is used in Scripture, both of the spoken and the Written Word; and it is also used, with its equivalents, by the Christian Church from the beginning; and is found freely in the writings of the Christian Fathers, and the Creeds of Christendom from the days of the apostles until now. All the qualities attributed to it are also proved; as well as the Divine purpose for which it was all given—even to be the sure and sufficient rule of faith and life.

VIEWS OF THE REFORMERS AND DR. W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

In various forms, essentially the same doctrine has been taught. Calvin says: "The Word itself, however it is *presented* to us, is like a mirror in which faith beholds God" (*Inst.* iii. ii. 6); where the word "presented" implies that the Bible is God's Word, for it is only when it is "presented" that we know it, or that it becomes His Word to us: and the figure of a mirror used shows it is true and trustworthy, unsoiled and unbroken, clear and transparent—a true, God-made mirror, of Himself and His love to us. Dr. W. Robertson Smith often called the Bible the Word of God, and attributed infallible truth and Divine authority to it; and said that it was the infallible and authoritative rule of faith and life. The name, purpose, and the attributes are frequently used in his writings, as they were in his teaching and speeches. He, also, said the Scripture records or "conveys" the Word of God, and is the "record" of God's Word or will, and the "declaration of what was in God's heart" in regard to us. "Since Scripture has no other end than to convey

to us a message, which when accompanied by the inner witness of the Spirit, manifests itself as the infallible Word of God, we may for practical purposes say that Scripture *is* the infallible Word of God." And that "message" is expressed in the words of Scripture as it is written, just as the words of a telegraphic message "present," "convey," or, as we have said, express and embody, yea form, and, to us constitute and are the message. So that when he used these words he meant in effect the same as in the other forms. He repudiated, as shown, the modern Broad Church error, that the Bible merely "*contains*" the Word of God—"that one part of the Bible is the Word of God, and another part is the word of man"—that besides the Word of God, it contains an indefinite number of other things not God's Word: and he maintained, on the contrary, that "the substance of *all* Scripture is God's Word. What is not part of the record of God's Word is no part of Scripture." And by the "substance" he meant the *whole* substance, as it is expressed in Scripture. By the "record" he meant the *whole* record; and that it was all true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority. "So long as we go to Scripture, only to find in it God and His redeeming love mirrored before the eyes of faith, we may rest assured that we shall find living, self-evidencing, *infallible truth in every part of it, and that we shall find nothing else.*" So John uses the word "record." "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son" (1 John 5¹⁰),—which is the strongest possible way of stating its Divine truth and authority. He was also wont to say that the voice of God drawing near to us as a gracious Father could be heard in every part of Scripture; and that directly or indirectly every part of it affected faith and life, and had some bearing on our salvation,—its chief end. "If I am asked why I receive Scripture as the Word of God, and as the only perfect rule of faith and life, I answer with all the Fathers of the Protestant Church, *Because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God, because in the Bible alone I find God drawing near to man in Jesus Christ, and declaring to us in Him His will for our salvation. And this record I know to be true by the witness of His Spirit in my heart, whereby I am assured that none other than God Himself is able to speak SUCH WORDS to my soul.*" Like all Scripture teachers, too, he attributes all this to the inspiration

of the Holy Spirit, quoting with approval Calvin's Commentary on 2 Tim. 3¹⁶, "This is the principle which distinguishes our religion from all others, that we know God has spoken to us, and are assuredly persuaded that the prophets spake not their own sense, *but as they were organs of the Holy Spirit, uttered only what was given them from heaven.*"¹

We have emphasised Dr. W. Robertson Smith's teaching on Scripture, because of his unique Biblical scholarship—specially in O.T. and Semitic literature; and because it supports and helps to state the doctrine of Scripture sought to be set forth here, and contains all the elements and essential points of it; specially from the side of the Bible as the revelation of God's will for our salvation, and of the writers as the organs of the Holy Spirit. We have throughout laid special emphasis on this in proof that the Bible is the Word of God; and in refutation of all views tending to put the Bible writers, and the teaching of Christ, in antithesis or antagonism,—urging often that this was precluded by the fact that the Holy Spirit was the One Supreme Teacher, who by His supernatural inspiration spake and taught in and through them all in everything they spoke or wrote for God; and that only this can account for the unity, amid the diversity, and the independence of Scripture, and the progressiveness of Revelation. I have, however, emphasised not only Revelation and the inspiration of the writers, but also, and specifically, the inspiration of the writings, as the Bible does (2 Tim. 3^{15, 16}); hence it becomes "The Word of God written," as the Westminster Confession well puts it. That the Bible "presents," or "conveys," the Revelation of God's will for our salvation, and was inspired to do so with infallible truth and Divine authority, and does so "in every part," we have also urged; and have no objection to this form of expression properly understood. But we have mostly chosen to say that Scripture *expresses, embodies, and, to us, forms* this Revelation; and that the *whole*

¹ Dr. W. Robertson Smith's doctrine of Scripture may be more fully seen in his published writings—specially the *O.T. in the Jewish Church*; his *Answers*; his *Speeches*—specially in General Assembly, 1878 (Blue Book); his *What History teaches us to seek in the Bible*. Also in Dr. Lindsay's article in the *Expositor*, Dec. 1894, and in the Note Books of the students who were so fortunate as to enjoy his rare teaching, and wise enough to record it.

Bible does so, and that God speaks to us the message of His grace, and makes this revelation of Himself, with truth and authority, in and through every part and passage of it. It is the Revelation or Word of God to us *only when it is expressed*, whether it be by speech, or Scripture, sign, or symbol. Until it is expressed or embodied, it is like a soul without a body—an unembodied spirit, to us unknowable and practically non-existent.

ALL SCRIPTURE IS THE WORD OF GOD, AND THE WORD OF MAN. THE THOUGHTS AND THE WORDS ARE GOD-BREATHED, THROUGH INSPIRED MEN.

Hence the Bible is the expression or embodiment of God's will, or self-revelation. As the Incarnate Word is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person," so the Written Word is in less perfect form and measure. And as man's words, where uttered or written, express or embody his mind and will, so the Bible does God's will. God's will becomes God's Word to us *when it is expressed*. The Bible is thus the Word of God, true, trustworthy and of Divine authority; it is so in all parts and things, small and great, in all it teaches, and as it is expressed. We disown the expression "verbal inspiration," because it has been abused, and is used in different senses, and to many means dictation, which we have utterly repudiated; and this was never taught in its usual sense by any intelligent upholder of the Bible claim. But while we disown this, we hold that the words of Scripture are *not merely* the words of man, but also the words of God—the Spirit's inspired words, as well as the writer's spontaneous words. The Holy Spirit had much to do with the expression of the Revelation as well as with the communication of it, with the words as with the thoughts;—as Paul expressly says, "which things we teach not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, combining spiritual words with spiritual things." In fact, as shown, we must believe this, or reject the whole claim and teaching of Scripture, and of Christ and His apostles, upon this prime root-question; for they not only claim to speak and write the word of the Lord—the words of God, as the Spirit gave them utterance—but they found great truths and arguments on single words of it; and Christ most absolutely declares that "Scripture

cannot be broken," and that till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle of it shall in nowise pass or fail till all be fulfilled. Besides, there is a natural and necessary connection between inspired thoughts and inspired words ; and it is impossible to separate them without destroying both. By the very nature of our mental being, thoughts are united to words as soul to body. We think in words, and they are as needful to the conception as to the communication of our ideas. There is indeed by the laws of our thinking, a natural adaptation of words to thoughts, and ideas spontaneously seek embodiment in fitting words. And in spiritual things revealed by the Spirit there is both a natural and a supernatural clothing and combining of spiritual thoughts with spiritual words, by the inspiration of the same Spirit Who revealed them, as Paul says. In the revelation of God to man, the language of man becomes part of the revelation of God. The human words become the Spirit-inspired vehicle and embodiment of the Divine thoughts.

WORDS AND DETAILS BEST REVEAL GOD'S HEART.

DR. WESTCOTT AND THE REFORMERS.

Further, the peculiarities of the individual writers become part of the Divine message—the Spirit-breathed expression of the portion of God's Revelation which each was by nature fitted, and by grace chosen, to convey and embody. As Dr. Westcott well says, "It would be easy to prove that there is no singularity in expression or detail, no trait of individual feeling or conception in the Gospels which does not in some one place greatly affect our notion of Christ's teaching,"¹—aye, I should say, and of Christ Himself. As Origen said long ago, "Every word of it, if only it be rightly viewed, effects a special purpose ; for Revelation is not a vain thing for us ; it is our life." Similarly Dr. Thomas Lindsay, giving the views of the Reformers, specially of Luther, says, "The simplest Bible stories, and even geographical and architectural descriptions, may and do give us the sidelights necessary to complete the manifestation of God to His people." "No detail of individual or national life is useless. Everything helps to fill in the picture of fellowship between God and His people, and which can come true in our experience if

¹ *Introduction to the Gospels*, p. 24.

we have the same faith which these holy men of God had. The value of the whole Bible lies in the fact that directly or indirectly every part serves to convey to us an infallible declaration of the saving will of God.”¹ The Reformers gloried in the truth that the Bible brought God near to us as a redeeming God, speaking to us through it in love. Calvin delighted in the idea that Scripture was a clear mirror in which faith beholds God drawing near to us in grace, to lead us into fellowship with Himself; and said that “we can no more separate faith from Scripture than the rays of light from the sun.” And Luther revelled in the fact that the words of Scripture are the best means of revealing the heart of God to us; and that in them we hear the speech, and feel the love-throbs of our gracious Father’s heart. And if they are to do this truly and adequately, they must themselves be true, spiritual, and Divine words, properly expressing God’s heart, through the Spirit’s inspiration. So that in this sense, as Dr. Westcott says, “The letter becomes as perfect as the spirit,” or at least the inspired words become as true, suitable, and necessary for the expression of the spirit and the substance as for the conception of the Divine message. All the more is this so, that the words, as often said above, are the embodiment of the spirit, the language the expression of the thought, and the words alone reveal, convey, embody the substance, and make it known to us. We know nothing of the spirit, the substance, or the message except in and through the words. If the words are untrue, or unreliable, or inadequate, so, then, of necessity must our knowledge be of what was meant to be made known;—to us it exists only when it is expressed, and *wholly as it is expressed*. As in a telegraphic message, so in the Divine Message, the words *form, embody, constitute, and are* the message to us. We are, therefore, absolutely shut up to the words of Scripture for our whole knowledge and conceptions of the message and the salvation of God. It is, therefore, a patent impossibility to separate the inspired thoughts from the inspired words; and it is a palpable delusion to imagine that we can know anything truly of the Divine message, except through, and *as it is expressed, embodied, and exists in, the Divinely-inspired words*.

¹ *Expositor*, October 1894, pp. 247, 252, 260.

THE DIVINE MESSAGE IS THE INSPIRED EXPRESSION OF
INSPIRED HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND CONCEPTION.

Nay more, the Divine message itself is largely the expression of God-given human experience, in which God through it led the inspired person into such a knowledge of Himself and of His will, truth, and grace as was fitted and designed to become, and was meant to be, a permanent part of the substance of the Divine message to men. The inspired writers not only received Divine revelations, but they were Divinely led into spiritual experience by which they received, appropriated, and lived by the revelation themselves, and by which they were taught and intended to communicate it to others. And the Holy Spirit, Who through this experience gave them this revelation, by His inspiration also moved and inspired them to express and embody it in Scripture, as it is expressed, to be His gracious message to men. This is true specially of the Psalms and the Prophets, the Gospels and the Epistles, and much else of O.T. and N.T. It is the personal experience of the men of God in God's manifestation of Himself to them, in their fellowship with Him, by which they came to know Him and His will for our salvation. It is a part taken out of the life and spiritual experience of holy men of God in their intercourse with God, by which they learned these revelations experimentally through their life experience of Him; and who not only spake but learned as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and taught them in speech and writing, "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," expressing spiritual things in spiritual words. Such experience naturally sought embodiment in language akin, and tends to create fitting expression for itself. But in these cases the natural was supplemented by the supernatural inspiration of the Spirit, both to enable them to get a proper apprehension of the revelation meant to be given them through the experience, and to express the same in the Divine message as God wished it. So that in these chief portions of Scripture we have a revelation not only of the heart of God, but also of the heart of men in their intercourse with God. It is embodied as it is by the co-operation of God and man through the Spirit, in order that we may through similar experience, by the teaching of the same Spirit, come to a similar knowledge of God in Christ, and experimentally

know the great salvation, and enter into the Divine fulness of the life eternal more and more unto the perfect day.

THE FINAL STATEMENT. THE BIBLE IS THE COMBINED PRODUCT OF GOD AND MAN THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

And the whole of Scripture comes to us as it was conceived by man, as revealed by God,—the Divine thoughts being conveyed to us through the human conceptions, and both the conception and the expression being the product of the co-operation of God and man through the Spirit. So that it is all Divine, and all human; so perfectly human *because* so truly Divine, so really Divine because so truly human. For here God and man are akin, and in combination;—God's manifestation combining with man's experience through the Spirit's inspiration, in producing the Bible; and making it in veritable fact, the true word of man, and the real Word of God. As in the Incarnate Word, which is the highest and most perfect form of the union of the Divine and the human, so in the Written Word, the Divine and the human are so combined in one unique Spirit-made unity that it is impossible to separate them, as it is irreverent to attempt it. It combines true Divinity with perfect humanity, thorough truthfulness with Divine authority; and every part and word of it is both human and Divine in one indissoluble union. It is instinct with the life and love of God and man that we by it may live and love as son of God and brother of man. And throughout every portion and expression of it, we may hear the voice and heart of our Father—God speaking through the voice and heart of our brother-man the gracious message of a Father's love. Its inspiration is, like the incarnation, the work of the Holy Ghost: and it is the image and prefiguration of Christ, as He is its substance and fulfilment. It is in every part and fibre the message of love Divine and life eternal; because it reveals Him Who is "the true God and eternal life." Hence how sacred the obligation to keep it inviolate and inviolable, in every part and point, as the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever, against all assailants and disintegrators of it; as He did when He declared, as its Author, End, and Fulfiller, with such majestic absoluteness, that heaven and earth should pass away, but one jot or one tittle of it shall in nowise pass or fail till all

shall be fulfilled. And hence what new emphasis, significance, and obligation are given to His significant and gracious command about it, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they that testify of Me." It is as Origen and Origen's Lord and ours profoundly said, "*It is our life*"; because it brings us into the full knowledge and personal experience of Him "Whom to know is life eternal."

As in the Incarnate Word there dwelleth all the fulness of Godhead bodily, so that every believing soul may by faith, through the Spirit, in Him know, participate in, and possess that Divine fulness more and more to the supply of all our spiritual needs, and the full development of our spiritual being, till we "grow up in Him through the knowledge of the Son of God into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and are filled with all the fulness of God." So in the Written Word there dwelleth for us the revelation of the infinite fulness of the light and love, of the grace and truth of God in Jesus Christ,—the unsearchable riches of Christ; which by faith and the teaching of the same Spirit Who inspired it, and filled Him, we may know God in Christ, and enter into the Divine fulness of grace and truth which it pleased the Father should dwell in Him for us, and experience the life more and more abundantly unto the perfect day. For it is through the Written Word alone that we can know the Incarnate Word, or the will and grace of God for our salvation. What the eye is to the man,—disclosing all the glories of the visible world, and what the telescope and microscope are to the Scientist—revealing all the marvels of matter and life in the unseen universe—, the Bible is to the spiritual man revealing all the infinitudes of life, and truth, and love in the spiritual universe, of which Godhead is the fountain, and the Incarnate Word is the Divine-human centre as our Brother-God. Like Christ, who is its Author, theme, and end, the Bible, because filled with Him, has exhaustless fulness, perennial freshness, everlasting newness. Every true believer finds something in it that no other found. Every living Christian is daily discovering new treasures of grace and truth in it. Every new age finds treasures in it for itself suited to its peculiar needs, conditions, and problems, which no other found,—the varying experiences of the advancing ages disclosing its undiscovered riches and Divine fulness. Newborn nations arising have found

meanings and applications in it unknown till their experience unfolded them. Arising with its healing light on long benighted races and peoples, they have discovered in its unsearched riches what no others did, according to their peculiar mental character and experience. And so on will progress in the knowledge and experience of its infinite depths of grace and truth go, as, through the night of doubt and sorrow, the Church of the living God is led by the providence of God, and the teaching of the Spirit of God, into the meaning of the Word of God, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts amid the full blaze of the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ in all the glory of His appearing. Then, but not till then, will the Written Word vanish in the light of the Eternal Word, as fades the morning star into the glory of the noonday sun.

This, then, is what we hold to be the true Bible doctrine of Holy Scripture. And it is because the Bible is all this and infinitely more, that we have in this book been constrained to defend and uphold it against the countless, ceaseless attempts being made in our time by sceptics, rationalists, Broad Churchmen, and even Evangelical Christian errorists, whose bold theories and false speculations tend to discredit, disintegrate, and destroy the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of both the Written and the Incarnate Word of God; for, as proved, they stand or fall together. Our answer, then, to the great and grave questions asked by the title, "Is Christ Infallible and the Bible True?" is that the Bible is true, because Christ is infallible; and He who is "The Truth" and the faithful and true Witness declares it to be true. The Bible, then, is the Word of God—true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, and the Divine rule of faith and life; or the Bible is the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority, *in all it teaches*, and the Divine rule of faith and life. It claims that "All Scripture is God-breathed" (θεόπνευστος), and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work." And Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, attests and seals that claim in the name of Godhead in His own solemn and majestic words: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

APPENDIX

APPENDIX



NOTES, ILLUSTRATIONS, AND CONFIRMATIONS.

BOOK I.

NOTE 1.—Many modern writers and schools, referred to in this and the other books, in their admirable enthusiasm for the teaching of Jesus, teach and insist that it is the supreme and only infallible and Divinely-authoritative standard of faith and life ; and that by it must be tested and judged the teaching of all the prophets and apostles. The upholders of the Bible claim need not, should not, and do not qualify but glory in magnifying His teaching, *so far as He magnifies it*, as we have urged ; for it is on Him and His teaching we have supremely taken our stand for the Bible claim. But those who speak of Christ's teaching, as above, make several false assumptions, and misleading oversights. First, they assume antithesis and antagonism between His teaching and that of the inspired Bible writers, which, as shown, is untrue, and the opposite of what He taught. Second, that His teaching is the complete, highest, and final teaching of Revelation ; while He taught that not His own but theirs, by the Spirit after Pentecost, would be so, as proved. Third, that the teaching of the Bible writers is indefinitely erroneous and untrustworthy ; which is an error, contradicting Christ's teaching. They also overlook, First, that Christ teaches that all Scripture is the Word of God, of infallible truth and Divine authority,—declaring even the O.T. to be so, and inviolable in every jot and tittle. Second, that in order to find His Divinely true and authoritative teaching, we must hold and postulate the same of their conceptions and record of it in the Scriptures : for it is through these alone we can know it. In the very act of asserting the infallible truth and Divine authority of His teaching, we of necessity presuppose the same of the Scriptures through which solely we get it. Third, that if the Apostolic writings are not true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, neither can His teaching, as known to us, be ; so far as they are not so, so far must His teaching to us be,—and then all would be uncertain. And if they are true, it could only be by the Divine Spirit enabling them so to understand and express His teaching, with infallible truth and Divine authority, as He promised. Fourth, that, as shown, it was the same Divine Spirit who inspired Him to teach

with infallible truth and Divine authority, who inspired them to do the same, in all their teaching, both by word and writing, as He taught. So that, if His teaching, as known to us, is true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, so must theirs and Scripture also be ; for *that* is His teaching. But strange to say many that profess special homage to His teaching do not receive it when He teaches *that* because it contradicts their own ! ! He places the teaching of His inspired apostles and prophets on a level with His own in truth and authority as God's Word, because it was not theirs merely, but His own, and His Father's, by the Holy Spirit teaching in and through them the Word of the Lord.

NOTE 2. — Confirming the above, and our interpretation, Dr. Westcott on John 14²⁶ 16^{13,14} says : "This section marks the position of the apostles with regard to Revelation as unique ; and so also by implication the office of the Apostolic writings, as a record of their teaching."

NOTE 3.—While it is true that Christ's teaching must ever occupy a unique place, so far as He taught, or was free to teach the will of God for our salvation, yet there is a sense in which a saved sinner could, by the Spirit's inspiration, teach the Gospel to fellow-sinners that even a sinless Saviour could not. A sinner saved by grace and inspired by the Holy Ghost could teach it experimentally, as he knew it in his own experience as a sinner under grace. Jesus as the perfect Son of God, and perfect Son of Man, and, therefore a perfect organ of the Holy Spirit, who could and did receive a full anointing of the Spirit, could and did teach the Gospel with a fulness, perfection, and power all His own. But He never knew what it was to be born again, to become a child of God, to repent of sin, and to be forgiven, to be delivered from the dominion of Satan, and purified from evil. And therefore a David and a Peter, a Paul and a John, could from personal experience tell sinful fellow-men something about repentance and forgiveness, reconciliation to God and purification from sin, faith in Christ and peace with God, which only sinners who had personally experienced these could do, and could bring it home to the hearts of fellow-sinners by the Spirit with a sympathy, personality, and power all their own.

BOOK II.

NOTE 1.—Our Lord's words declaring the Bible to be the Word of God,—of infallible truth, Divine authority, and eternal inviolability,—are the words of God. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." And if His teaching, is, as alleged and implied, not to be held as decisive and final on this supreme and fundamental religious question because He was also man, then that means, and involves : first, that an infallible and Divinely-authoritative Revelation from God to man is an impossibility, which is a vain imagination ; second, that there is no seat of authority in religion at all, which is a baseless and ruinous negation ; third, that our Lord is not an infallible and Divinely-authoritative teacher in any-

thing—that, in fact, He is not God because He is man, which is blasphemy.

NOTE 2.—Dr. W. Robertson Smith says: “God dealt with Israel in the way of special revelation. . . . The whole growth of the true religion up to its perfect fulness is set before us in the record of God’s dealings with Israel, culminating in the manifestation of Jesus Christ. There can be no question that Jesus Himself held this view, and we cannot depart from it without making Him an imperfect teacher and an imperfect Saviour” (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 10). Here again is declared the Divine authority of the teaching of Christ, and of the Scripture He endorsed and fulfilled.

NOTE 3.—Canon Gore says: “It is surely beyond question that our Lord is represented in the Gospels as an infallible no less than as a sinless teacher. Whenever He teaches it is in the tone which could only be morally justifiable in the case of one who taught infallibly ‘the Word of God.’ Jesus Christ, the Son of God incarnate, was and is, at every moment and in every act, both God and man, personally God made man” . . . (*The Incarnation*, p. 153; *Dissertations*, pp. 80, 94, 95). When He says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away,” He claims infallible truth, Divine authority, and eternal endurance for every word He ever spoke, as the Word of the Lord that liveth and abideth for ever. And this claim was either sublime truth or supreme presumption.

NOTE 4.—Tholuck well says: “The Redeemer cannot be convicted either of rabbinical artificiality or hermeneutical error.”

NOTE 5.—Dr. Sanday in *The Oracles of God*, p. 110, says that the errors of statement of our Lord would belong in some way to the humanity, and not to the Divinity. He gives two examples of these supposed errors:—First, Christ’s saying that He as the Son of Man knew not then of the precise day and hour of the far off judgment day; which we have sufficiently explained; and which was not an error but a fact, if our Lord spoke the truth then; and which only shows the writer’s own error of confusing non-knowledge with error or untruth! The second is amazing and amusing. Because Christ said, “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good”; which again is no error save of him who charges it upon the Son of God, but sure, simple, and sublime fact; for surely it is God the Father who maketh His sun to rise on them, as He “maketh His rain to fall upon the just and the unjust.” And sunrise is so spoken of amid all the light of modern science, and in the strictest scientific manuals and university text-books; and is literally true both phenomenally and actually as spoken by our Lord. It would be interesting to see the form in which Dr. Sanday would improve upon this sublime utterance of our Lord, so as to be at once in accord with science now, and suited for Palestinian peasants in our Lord’s time, and all the ages since! It would also be of moment to know how Christ could teach error in His humanity without His Divinity being responsible for it, when He is the God-man in one unique Person—

ality ! Such are the errors and abysses into which erring men fall, when they presume to charge Him with error who is the God of Truth.

BOOK III.

NOTE.—Of the supernatural Revelation of the Bible, Dr. W. Robertson Smith says : “God dealt with Israel in the way of special revelation. The revelation of the O. and N.T. may fairly claim to be revelation of God to men in a special and absolute sense” (*The Prophets of Israel*, pp. 10, 14).

“The characteristic of the prophet is a faculty of spiritual intuition, not gained by human reason, but coming to him as a word from God Himself. The prophets spoke under the immediate influence of the Spirit or hand of Jehovah” (article “Bible,” p. 634). Of Divine prediction he says : “The work of the O.T. prophets was based on their insight into the future purpose of God, and took the shape of prediction of the things to be fulfilled in Christ.” Of Scripture he says : “If we are to have a trustworthy revelation at all, it is necessary that the one Record of revelation, which God has given us, be such that we can feel sure that it tells us all we need to know of God and His will, and that it tells us this with *unvarying and infallible truth, not mingling God’s message with doctrines of men*” (*Answer*, pp. 30, 45). Hence of Christ and Scripture he says, emphasising “a distinct foreshadowing of a personal Messiah,” “Jesus read in the Psalms and the Prophets the direct and unmistakable image of His own experience and work as the founder of the spiritual kingdom of God” (“Bible,” p. 642).

Of Plenary Inspiration he says : “I am willing to have my views of Deuteronomy tested even by the strictest views of plenary inspiration, and I am confident they are able to stand the test” (*Answer*, p. 3). What a contrast all this by the greatest O.T. and Semitic scholar of the age to all those rationalistic critics and crude theorists, referred to above, who explicitly or implicitly deny the supernatural working of God in the history and religion of Israel, evaporate supernatural Revelation, disown Divine prediction properly so called, either in the history of Israel, or the coming of the Messiah, or the Person, work, and experience of Jesus Christ as the fulfiller of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms ; as also to those whose naturalistic theories and interpretations preclude or minimise miracle, virtually evaporate immediate inspiration by the Holy Spirit of the Bible writers, bring down prophecy to the level practically of ordinary spiritual illumination, or natural conscience and sagacity, and not differing in kind from ours, sometimes ascribe it to pride, presumption, and national vanity, and make the prophets visionaries and Utopians ; and in effect reduce the inspired Scripture to a character not different *in kind* from other literature, with similar liability to err and mislead.

BOOK IV.

NOTE 1.—Writing on 1 Cor. 14³⁷, to show how Christ seals the apostolic teaching and stands by Scripture, Dr. Meyer says : “Paul

here stamps the seal of *apostolic* authority, and upon this seal *Christ* must stand."

Similarly on Matt. 10¹⁴⁻²⁰, when Christ *first* sent out the apostles to preach, and declared that what they spake was what the Spirit spake, and declared the awful doom of those who would not receive their words, Meyer says: "The theopneustic relation by means of which His disciples shall become πνευματικοῖς πνευματικὰ συγκρίνοντες (1 Cor. 2¹³) is construed by Jesus decisively and in no half-way fashion." And so as Christ says of His words, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," so also were the apostle's words, for both came from the Spirit.

NOTE 2.—In confirmation of what we have often urged as to the absolute necessity of the Holy Spirit's inspiration, as alone being sufficient, to explain the apostles' conception and expression of Christ's teaching, Person, and work, so as to make the one complete and harmonious representation they have given in the complementary parts and aspects each was chosen, fitted, and inspired to receive and express—Dr. Westcott says: "However far one Evangelist might have been led by the laws of his own mind, it can only be by the introduction of a higher power that four unconsciously combine to rear from different sides a harmonious and perfect fabric of Christian truth" (*Introduction to the Gospels*, p. 26). Nothing but pervasive Divine inspiration could secure such spiritual unity with such striking diversity, such patent independence with such thorough truthfulness and harmony, such perfect humanity with such true divinity in the Scripture histories.

NOTE 3.—Among many others teaching the indefinite erroneousness of Scripture in every kind of thing—including the moral and spiritual contents—Dr. Ladd may suffice. He says, after giving the classes of contents forming Scripture, "We cannot affirm infallibility in *any one* of these classes of contents under which we have considered the subject-matter of the Bible, or of *any one* of those separate or larger divisions of the contents" (vol. i. pp. 754-6). Also he specifically charges the N.T. writers with large numbers of "Hermeneutical mistakes" in interpreting and applying the O.T.,—even in showing them to be fulfilled in Christ as the Messiah, in the great facts and truths that form the roots and the foundations of the Christian faith (p. 445). So that the N.T. writers have misread and misused the O.T. revelations about the Christ, and misled mankind thereby!—although it is only from the N.T. inspired writers we get the real and only Divine and authoritative interpretation of the O.T., as Dr. W. Robertson Smith, Dr. Westcott, and all the leading teachers, and the Christian Church have ever taught. And Dr. Ladd does so because, forsooth! he thinks they do not give the literal interpretation of the words of the O.T. as in the minds of the prophets!—as if the literal were the only true meaning, and as if Christ did not teach and set His apostles the example of giving a fuller and a deeper meaning to the O.T. than was known in some cases to the O.T. writers! Verily, as Dr. Westcott well says, the objectors to the literal fulfilment of prophecy, in cases specified by Christ and His apostles, are the real and unreasonable literalists. Well does Dr. Saphir say, that while

they say they believe that the Bible *contains* a revelation, they do not believe what it contains,—not even in the essential things.

But as Dr. Ladd seems to hold the inerrancy and Divine authority of Christ's teaching, he thus refutes all his other errors, and supplies in that the true antidote to them ; for, as proved, if Christ teaches anything, He is the most absolute teacher of the truth, inviolability, and Divine authority of Scripture even to jot and tittle. He also admits that the Hebrew Scriptures give "conceptions of the order of creation and of nature, in her relations to God and man, which are far beyond the age of their origin, and correspond in a wonderful degree to those which modern science has only recently attained" (p. 284). But he fails to give the only rational explanation of this unique fact, in contrast with all heathen conceptions, in the supernatural inspiration of the Spirit of God in giving both the conceptions and the expression of them as written in the Scriptures.

BOOK V.

As to the agreements of Science and philosophy with Scripture, let it suffice to say here that, with a few exceptions, the greatest scientists have been Christian men, and even defenders of the Christian faith. The matters and points in which Science and Scripture agree exceed immeasurably those in which they even appear to differ. This first decisive fact has been too often overlooked to the great loss of both Scripture and science.

1. They agree as to the existence of God, a personal, self-existent Supreme Being, the all-wise and almighty Creator, a righteous and a gracious moral Governor. Science and philosophy confirm Scripture in declaring by their greatest teachers, with Lord Kelvin, that the only rational explanation of Creation is to be found in the will of an intelligent and almighty Creator.

2. In striking contrast with all ancient heathen religion and philosophy, they agree in distinguishing between the Creator and the Creation ; and in their latest doctrine of a God immanent in, and yet transcendent over all nature, they simply express in philosophic form the ancient and distinctive revelation of Scripture, as to God and His relation to Creation.

3. They agree as to man's place in creation ; and put him in the recent and last stage, and in the highest position, as the head, goal, crown, and purposed Lord of creation.

4. They agree as to the original home of mankind in the highlands of Central Asia ; which Scripture teaches, history confirms, and Science supports.

5. They agree as to man's original state, as made in the image of God. This Scripture reveals, the reminiscences, aspirations, and anticipations of mankind, the tradition legend and philology seem to require ; and it is confirmed by Science in the fact noted and urged by famous scientists, that the classifications made by naturalists and geologists independently of each other, and both independently of Scripture, as to the order and progress of Creation, are substantially the same ;—the mind of the Creator being expressed as written in the rocky pages of the great stone book, as found by

geologists,—and the mind of man as expressed in the classifications of naturalists showing that intellectually, as well as morally, man was made in the image of God.

6. They confirm each other as to the fall of man. For traditions of the Fall have been found among all races of men ; which strongly corroborate Bible representations. The profoundest philosophy of our day accords, too, with Scripture in tracing man's fall and degeneracy to the abuse, through temptation, of man's free will—that high but awful prerogative of moral being.

7. The truest Science, and the profoundest philosophy, corroborate Revelation as to the present condition of man—as a state of sin, guilt, and depravity. They further confirm it in teaching that man still retains elements of his original likeness to God,—lingering rays of his lost glory ; which imply the potency, and the promise of restoration ; and mark him out as the proper subject of salvation ; and thus supply a basis for the Bible revelation of grace and redemption.

8. They agree as to the fact of the Deluge—traditions of it being found all the world over ; but here, as elsewhere, the Bible form, because of Divine inspiration, is patently the best, and the most God-honouring.

9. Then the great central Bible revelation of redemption by Sacrifice, which is the burden, substance, root and fruit of Revelation, is abundantly corroborated by the universal prevalence of propitiatory sacrifice among all races from the earliest time. For on the far off horizon of the dim and distant ages, as far back as not only history and tradition, but also legend, custom, rites, and ceremonies, silent significant stones, and religious origins can carry us, we see the smoke of sacrifice rising from ancient temple, stone circle, deep forest, or rude altar, to propitiate Deity, and ease conscience ;—as distinctly as Noah's sacrifice rose from the summit of Mount Ararat, in the pure air of a world renewed, after the wreck of the Deluge. Behind that, though often in crude, cruel, and confused form, lay the whole idea and substance of the Bible revelation, of the need, the hope, and the fact of redemption. And they are strong confirmations of its truth and significance, from the universal race-old practice, and the deepest, most essential elements of man's moral and spiritual nature. It is also confirmed by the analogous fact, so clearly perceived, and strongly emphasised in our recent science and philosophy, that sacrifice, in some form or other, is the condition, means, and law of progress in all life and history.

10. The Bible doctrine, that God made of one blood all nations, is confirmed by the highest authorities in ethnology. Physiological scientists, too, of the greatest weight have all along taught that there is no such difference among the various races of mankind as, on the supposition that they all sprang from a single pair, may not be accounted for by the modifying and transforming effects of change of climate, environment, experience, and other influences, which, through long ages and vicissitudes, gradually affect, and account for the variations and transformations. And what ethnology and physiology maintain, philology confirms into a practical certainty by its great fundamental stocks of languages, and their radical connections with each other.

11. Science and philosophy most powerfully support Revelation as to the world being under a moral government. They not only declare by their truest, deepest, and most assured teachings, and through their weightiest teachers, that the facts and phenomena of nature and history, as well as the first principles of science and philosophy, imply and require a supreme Being, both rational and moral, as the Creator and Ruler of this world, and the universe; but also that His government over men is moral: and that the Christian view of God and not the naturalistic, or even the merely theistic view, best explains and agrees with the constitution of nature, and the course of Providence, and best meets the ethical needs, harmonises with the religious instincts, and accords with the surest intuitions of mankind. The illustration and enforcement of the argument for the moral government of God may be seen in the leading ethical and theological philosophic writers from the beginning. It will suffice here to refer to the unanswered, because unanswerable, reasoning of Butler, in his immortal *Analogy*, which has baffled all the attempts of scepticism to invalidate, far less to refute. The profound thinking and unanswerable logic of Butler, enforced by the massive weight and overpowering eloquence of Chalmers, and defended by the wide learning and rebutive acumen of Gladstone, present an impassable barrier to unbelief; and constitute a positive argument in support of Scripture, which, after the assaults of several generations, still remains in all its massive strength unmoved and immovable.

12. Even Evolution itself, which scared so many as first propounded, and which sceptics imagined was fatal to the Christian faith, has yielded some valuable confirmations of the Bible, by supplying many analogies, in such points as the analogy between progress in life, and the progressiveness of Revelation and the development of spiritual life; natural selection and gracious election; survival of the fittest, and eternal life in Christ; heredity and imputation; biogenesis and regeneration; adaptation to environment and faith in God through Christ; conformity to type, and transformation by predestination, "to be conformed to the image of His Son"; the struggle for existence leading to higher development, and perfection through suffering; degeneration, and eternal death through the law of evil habit making character permanently evil; persistency of type, and the perseverance of the saints; the reign of law, and the irresistibility of God's will; progress in life by imperceptible gradations—with leaps at leading stages by the special impulse of the Creator, as at man's creation,—and the Divine impulse given at regeneration, and successive stages in the spiritual life; the potency and promise of higher developments of life, and the hope of resurrection to a higher life in a Risen Christ:—these and other points of analogy between evolution and revelation are corroborative and suggestive. Amongst others, see Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, and Peyton's *Memorabilia of Jesus*—one of the freshest and most original books of this age.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT FROM THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES AND
BIBLE MINUTIF.

We take our Christianity from the Bible. All our knowledge of it is derived therefrom. Whatever else we may know of it from heathen or Christian writings or from the usages, and institutions of nations where it spread, is simply illustrative, or confirmative of what we find in Scripture. Our only authority for our knowledge of it is the Bible. If, therefore, it is untrustworthy, or indefinitely erroneous, our knowledge of it is so also. In whatever degree Scripture is untrue or doubtful, so precisely is our conception of it wrong or uncertain. As is the book, so in this case must the religion be. Thus the opposing theories as to Scripture will naturally produce different conceptions of Christianity. Hence rationalists have practically abandoned the Christian faith; while those that with them disown the Bible claim who continue Christian do so from other reasons, or inconsistency. And in any case the religion derived from a thoroughly trustful, and from an indefinitely erroneous Bible, will greatly differ. Our conceptions of the religion must vary as our ideas of the Record.

This holds specially of the Christian faith, because the Bible is so largely made up of facts and details; and since the truths are expressed largely through these, the reliability of these in the Record is obviously essential to the revelation of the religion. The facts convey and constitute the Revelation. The doctrines are the facts in the abstract, the facts are the doctrines in the concrete.

As the opposing views of the Bible affect our conceptions of Christianity, so they do the evidences of it, even in minutiae.

1. One of the best lines of Christian evidences is what Paley so well calls and illustrates,—the argument from “undesigned coincidence”; which is valid, and effectual for all times, in every phase of the conflicts between faith and unbelief; for it establishes the credibility of the Bible, which is essential to the proof and defence of the faith, and proves it true, and makes its defence impregnable. But the theory of indefinite erroneousness makes the construction and application of such an argument impracticable. For the argument is made from details, composed of minute points of correspondence, all which are, by this theory, held to be unreliable. So that this theory would invalidate one of the best lines of Christian evidence.

2. So the argument from Prophecy would by this theory be greatly weakened, and in some important cases nullified. The weight of the evidence from prophecy lies, in many cases, in the completeness of the fulfilment of the prophecy by the subsequent event; and in the exactness with which the one answers to the other. The more numerous the details fitting into each other, the more minute the points of correspondence between them, and the more fully and precisely they dovetail into each other, the stronger is the proof of the truth of the prediction; and the weightier is the evidence from prophecy for the faith. In many well-known cases reckoned

among the most important proofs from prophecy,—because connected with the Person, and work of Christ,—the whole force of the argument—yea the very fulfilment itself, depends upon exact agreement in little things, and consists in precise correspondence in minutiae.

It is the habit of Christ and His apostles in showing the fulfilment of O.T. prophecies by N.T. events to use indiscriminately facts, details, and even words, so as to plainly imply that they held all and each as equally true and authoritative. This fact alone should settle to all who own their Divine mission and authority that the Bible is true and authoritative,—especially as our Lord Himself is the most decisive of all in this. Further, many of the cases in which this is implied are those proving the Messiahship of Christ. The revelation depends upon the truthfulness of the details, consists in the preciseness of the correspondence in minute points, and postulates the truth and authority of the words—sometimes of a single word. And in several cases, where some items are difficult to reconcile, we require to hold to their truthfulness and reconcilability; otherwise the proof fails, and the inspired writer's attempt to prove the Messiahship of Christ is a failure; and therefore they cannot be trusted when professedly teaching even the most fundamental truths!

3. Similarly the evidence from miracles would by this theory be impaired or lost; especially in the great fundamental miracle of Our Lord's resurrection; the root and strength of all other miracles, and the very citadel of the Christian faith. For the proof of it depends upon the truthfulness of the narrative: and postulates the reconcilability of seeming discrepancies in the accounts of it. Hence those that do not believe it, and, therefore, consistently reject Christianity, always urge the seemingly conflicting statements about it in the Gospels as a ground for disbelief of it. And while no wise Apologist would admit that discrepancies in the narratives would justify rejection of the fact, since all truth has difficulties, and this has special reasons to explain them, yet every able apologist thinks it wise to prevent them being magnified, to reduce them, and to offer at least a possible solution of them.

4. So the Moral Evidence of Christianity, one of the strongest lines, depends upon the truthfulness and authority of Scripture, even in minutiae. It is from the Bible we know the moral character of Christianity. Therefore, so far as one is untrue or uncertain, so far our knowledge and estimate of the other are false or doubtful; and so far, therefore, the moral evidence would be unknown, unfelt, or invalidated.

The main weight of the moral argument for the Christian faith is the moral character of Christ. Therefore, so far as the Record is untrue, or uncertain, so far the weight of this evidence is diminished. The finer and higher the character is, the more readily is a defect or blemish seen, and the more injuriously is the cause supported by it affected; so that, if the Book giving Christ's character is indefinitely erroneous, or unreliable, the evidential value is lessened. Besides, character often reveals itself most in little things—

"In little words and little deeds
Great principles come grandly out."

The finer traits manifest themselves in the lesser things, and touches of exquisite moral beauty appear in minute points. But if these are not true and sure all this is lost ; and, all the peculiar charm, apologetic value, and moral effect of such things are also lost.

Our Lord's character is set forth largely in charming simplicity and interesting minuteness, with graphic details, and exquisite touches. These must, then, be truly given, else the moral evidence for the Christian faith from His unique character will be weakened or lost. And when the alleged errors are indefinite, our conceptions of what His character really was became uncertain or erroneous, and the evidential value of it weakened and confused. So that the moral evidence from Christ's character depends largely upon the truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture, even in minutiae.

5. So also with the evidence from the beneficial effects of Christianity upon the character and history of men and nations—a most powerful argument for the Christian faith. But it is by the Scripture being regarded as the Word of God, of infallible truth, and Divine authority, that the great and blessed moral effects of Christianity have been produced. Nor could they be produced upon the theory of indefinite erroneousness ; for moral effect requires moral certainty in the cause ; which, as shown, this theory can never give, either as to Scripture teaching or Christ's character.

6. In like manner the experimental evidence for the truth of Christianity depends for its force upon the thorough truthfulness and Divine authority of Scripture. This is the argument for the Christian faith from the felt accordance between what the Bible declares I am, and what I find myself to be ; and between what I feel I as a sinner need, and what the Gospel provides ;—one of the weightiest arguments for the faith. For unless these declarations come with certainty and Divine authority, the correspondence cannot be discovered, nor the moral consciousness awakened. Unless I believe them to be true, and of Divine authority, I would not and could not feel their force, or experience their power ; and, therefore, should not realise their truth, or recognise their adaptation to my spiritual state.

The belief of the truth necessarily precedes the experience of its saving power. And as it is from a personal experience of its saving power that the deepest conviction and strongest evidence of its Divine origin comes, the main weight of the experimental evidence would, on the errorists' theory, be largely lost.

The same general line of argument holds as to the minutiae generally. For if these are not held as true and authoritative, not only is the self-evidencing power of Divine truth much weakened by the uncertainty, and the critical attitude necessarily assumed ; but all Scripture is, as shown, more or less thrown into doubt, and confusion. Therefore, that experimental proof of the truth, arising from the impressions made upon the mind, when Scripture is received as true, trustworthy, and of Divine authority, is largely gone ; especially as some of the most important facts and truths depend, as seen, upon minutiae.

Besides, many things that at one time did not "find" us, have found us later ; and little things that once had no meaning or power to us, were afterwards found precious and suggestive. As

each new stage of Christian growth, every fresh experience of Divine providence, or each reopening of the spiritual vision leads us, under the inspiring Spirit, into pastures and revelations new, in the untold treasures of the eternal Word, and into a personal experience of its illuminative and transforming power,—there burst upon us with new delight the unimagined Divine significance, and soul fascinating exhilaration, of that profound, far-reaching oracle. “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.*” There grows upon us, as the inspiring prospect opens up before our wondering gaze, the deepening conviction and delight, that every region and avenue of Revelation, and every part and passage of God’s Word, will yield to us, as they were designed to do, rich treasures of unknown truth, new visions of Divine revelation, fascinating fields of unexplored study, fresh springs of spiritual life.

Thus the self-evidencing power of the truth, when led by the Spirit, extends to the little as well as to the large things of Scripture. And gradually the experimental evidence for the truth stretches out to the whole contents of Scripture, and to every part and kind of thing therein.

The more fully our experience extends to all Scripture, the stronger and more complete is the experimental evidence of its truth and Divinity. How unwise and suicidal then, for the sake of the experimental evidence, to exclude, as all errorists do, larger or smaller portions of Scripture from this evidence; especially when much that is thus excluded has been found true and precious in the growing experience of God’s people?

It would simply put an arrest upon the fullest, and completest experimental confirmation of the truth, and Divine origin of Scripture, render it impossible ever to make our Christian experience coextensive with God’s Word; and thereby precludes us from ever attaining the strongest possible proof from experience of its Divine origin, truth, and authority. It has been shown how much the experimental evidence for Christianity depends upon the recognised truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of all Scripture,—even in minutiae. It has also been shown how almost every separate line of Christian evidence depends upon this, and how materially each would be weakened, if not all invalidated, by the opposite theories, and how seriously, therefore, our whole faith and life are affected by our doctrine of Holy Scripture. How supremely important, therefore, for the sake of the Christian faith, and the growth of the spiritual life, it is to maintain with Scripture and with Christ, the truthfulness, trustworthiness, and Divine authority of the Word of God in its integrity, solidarity, and inviolability, as He so solemnly and absolutely declared.

BOOK VII.

NOTE.—In giving the teaching of Christ on Scripture, it was shown that all attempts to find anything in His teaching to contradict or limit the Bible claim had utterly failed; the references made by many with such unthinking confidence to the “*I say unto you,*” and kindred passages, being shown not to oppose or qualify the Bible

claim and Christ's most absolute and decisive declaration of its truth and inviolability, Divine authority, and perpetuity, immediately before, but to confirm these when truly interpreted. But the amazing thing is that when they seem to have found some paltry thing in the Bible, as we have it, that may appear to conflict with the Bible claim and Christ's teaching, they at once conclude that the Bible claim, sealed by Christ, is false, the teachers of it discredited, and their own opposite theory proved by this paltry difficulty! They never seem to realise the seriousness of the issues they thus raise, and the infinitely greater difficulties to their own theories by the vast mass and decisive character of the direct evidence and positive proof for the Bible claim; every item of which, as proved, forms an incomparably greater difficulty to their own opposite theory than any number of the paltry, and mostly if not wholly irrelevant, seeming discrepancies on which they base and build their erroneous theories. For, if such despicable trifles, as they mostly are (and are, therefore, irrelevant as against the true Bible claim), justify the rejection of it, how much more, *a fortiori*, should the insuperable and overwhelming difficulties to their own unproved theories made by the whole massive weight of the evidence, backed by the whole Christian evidences, and the Divine weight of Christ, require them to abandon their own theories, which have no explicit, positive teaching to support them. And yet they never seem to think of all this, or attempt to meet the countless and serious difficulties of their own theories, which on their own principles as applied to the Bible claim, ought to be free of difficulties, or rejected. They make one paltry difficulty a sufficient reason for rejecting the pervading Bible claim, yet a thousand and one serious, and unanswerable difficulties, created by their rejection of the first and fundamental claim of the Bible, endorsed by Christ, seem insufficient to lead them even to think of abandoning their own;—though on their own principle, one such serious difficulty should be more than sufficient to do so. In short, the teachers of the Bible claim go by the rule,—the main, pervading and explicit teaching of Scripture and of Christ. The opponents of it go by the exception—the paltry seeming discrepancy; which as an exception would only prove the rule, but which when truly understood is not really an exception generally, and certainly is no valid objection to or reason for rejecting the Bible claim.

The references of Dr. Farrar and Dr. Briggs, etc., to the "I say unto you" passages, and to divorce, will suffice to illustrate the fallacy and unreasonableness of this pervertive principle and habit. As to the "I say unto you" passages, as shown, not one of them opposed or qualified the absoluteness of Christ's declaration to Scripture (Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁹, etc.), made immediately before, nor could they without contradicting Himself. And as to divorce, Christ never condemned what was taught by Moses in Scripture as the will or ideal of God, but on the contrary based His teaching on the Mosaic book of Genesis and the original Divine ideal of marriage as given there;—the laxer ideas being merely tolerated or permitted in exceptional cases to prevent greater evils, by Moses in a civil capacity as a ruler, as is done in Christendom to-day, but Moses ever held up the Divine ideal as written in God's Word in Genesis, etc. But in tolerating for a time this and many other like things—such as polygamy among his

most honoured servants, God did only what was a necessary adaptation of His revelations to the condition and the people of the times, in the imperfect state of things under the O.T. economy. Yet the higher Divine ideals were ever held up in Scripture, and were more and more realised in the life of His people, under His providential discipline and by His progressive revelations. Yet Dr. Farrar, etc., never seem to think it necessary to reconcile their false inference from their misinterpretation of this case with the explicit and decisive teaching of Christ given immediately before, as well as in all His teaching on Scripture, declaring most absolutely the infallible truth, Divine authority, and eternal inviolability of Scripture in even every jot and tittle (Matt. 5¹⁷⁻¹⁹). Their inference from this case against the Bible claim, in fact, contradicts the most absolute and decisive teaching of Christ on Scripture given there and everywhere, and makes Him contradict Himself. They thus raise all the tremendous difficulties and momentous issues as to the authority of His teaching, the source of our faith, and the truth of our religion, often urged above. And yet they never face these most serious difficulties; which are simply fatal to their false inferences and vague theories, while rejecting the primary, basal, and most pervasive teaching of both Scripture and Christ for a paltry self-created difficulty, which is really no difficulty at all except in their own imaginations.

Dr. Briggs urges that "there is not a word of Holy Scripture that teaches directly or indirectly the fulfilment of the details of predictive prophecy"! This is an astounding statement for any Bible student to make in view of the countless examples of literal fulfilments shown by Christ and His apostles, specially about His Messiahship, death, and resurrection. There are cases in which they were never meant to be fulfilled in literality, and are only figurative and ideal; but that does not affect the notorious fact that many were fulfilled literally, even to the minutest points.—But Dr. Briggs refutes himself by admitting that "the jots and tittles doubtless indicate the most minute details." The majestic and decisive words of the Lord Himself will, therefore, best close, as they opened, this book: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For, Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5^{17, 18}).

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CHAPTER II

THE GOSPEL AND THE LAW

IN his teaching Jesus took his stand, as we have seen, upon the Old Testament. He did not aim to introduce a wholly new religion. He clearly foresaw that some of his disciples would suppose that it was his purpose to break with the Old Testament system, and he warned them against this serious mistake by telling them that any of them who should feel themselves free to break the least commandment of the Old Testament law, and should teach others accordingly, should be called the least in the Kingdom of God (Mt. v. 19). His constant manner of speaking in regard to the Jewish religion and Scriptures shows the reverence in which he held them.¹

There is in one of his parables a significant expression in regard to the gradual progress of his truth in the world: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mk. iv. 28). This statement might be fitly applied to the whole process of revelation of which the Old Testament represents the earlier stages. It would as truly describe Jesus' idea of this process as it does the growth to which he immediately applied it. The Old Testament represents the first steps in a great course of revelation and redemption which reaches its consummation in Christ himself.

While, therefore, Jesus builds upon the Jewish religious system, he also builds far above and beyond it. While

¹ On this subject I would refer the reader to the following discussions: R. Mackintosh, *Christ and the Jewish Law*, 1886; E. Schürer, *Die Predigt Jesu Christi in ihrem Verhältniss zum alten Testament und zum Judenthum*, 1882; W. Bousset, *Jesu Predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judenthum*, 1892; L. Jacob, *Jesu Stellung zum mosaischen Gesetz*, 1893.

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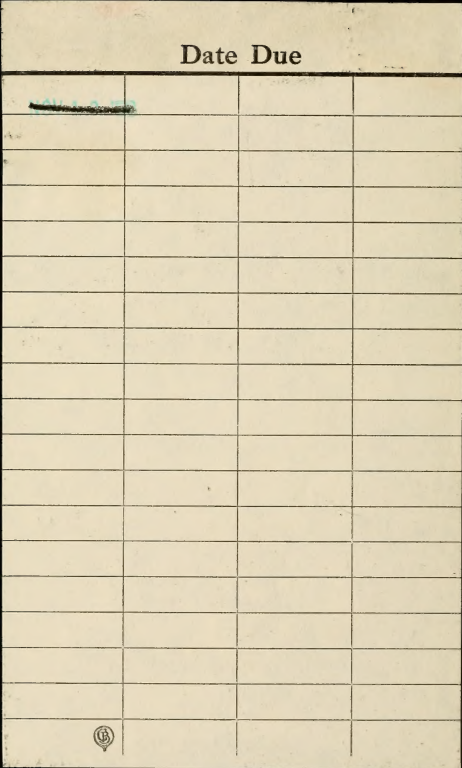
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